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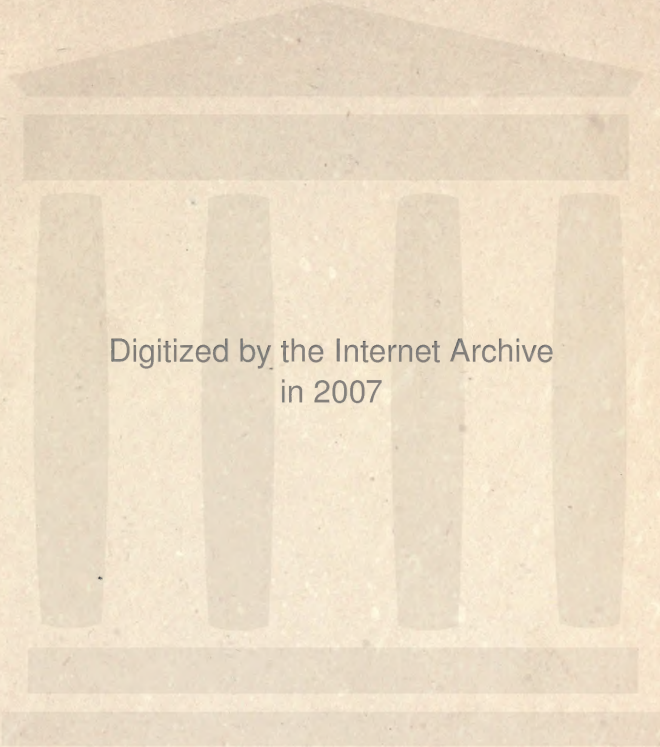


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VICENZA



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PORTICO AND STAIRCASE—PALAZZO COLLEONI

VICENZA

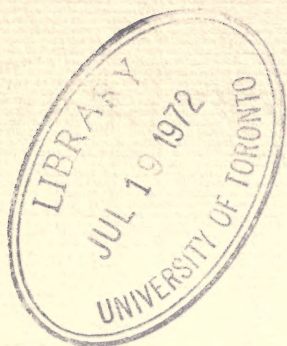
THE HOME OF "THE SAINT"

By

MARY PRICHARD-AGNETTI

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PAINTINGS BY
ANTONIO DALL' AMICO AND FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

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TO HER ILLUSTRIOUS SON
ANTONIO FOGAZZARO
THROUGH WHOM I CAME TO KNOW AND LOVE
VICENZA
I GRATEFULLY DEDICATE
THIS WORK



Preface

IN claiming some part in the origin of this work I may perhaps be assuming too much. Had *The Saint* never been written—to my own greater peace of mind as well as that of many another—Signora Agnetti's book might still have come into existence, for not only has she made Italy her home, taking a lively interest in the traditions and glories of this land, but she is also endowed with an artistic perception of great refinement and a highly cultured mind. The gentle author will, however, indulge the whim of a venerable artist to whom there comes through the medium of her work a certain sweetness as of his own, the reward, as it were, of his own long labours, and the most welcome of all rewards, after those that are hidden from the eyes of men. For I love Vicenza, a modest city in the light of statistics, but noble indeed in the light of art. I am proud to have been born there, and if, through my labours, she was first drawn thither who has now told the story of my city to a great foreign people, I delight in the fact, accounting it a service rendered to my birth-place, in compensation for that ardent and ambitious

love of the beautiful with which her glorious monuments and lovely hills inspired me as a child.

No other words could better express my sense of how worthy of its subject is Signora Agnetti's book, the fruit of much patient and conscientious study, nor could I more adequately assure her of my gratitude for the privilege of opening and introducing her pages—which I now do with praise and recommendation.

ANTONIO FOGAZZARO.

VALSOLDA,

September, 1909.

Introduction

AS we emerged from one of those narrow passage ways that give access to the Piazza, a blaze of sunshine greeted us joyfully. San Marco in all the glory of a September morning! Sipping our coffee at Florian's, we faced the ugly fact that this was our last day in Venice—our last day for at least two years!

“Of course, if we leave out Vicenza——” I ventured. A smile appeared at the corner of my companion's mouth, the smile he indulges in when he has discovered some fresh weakness in me, or believes he has.

“You *are* anxious to shirk your duty towards Vicenza,” he taunted. “Ah well, do as you like, *cara mia*. I myself am only too glad of another day in this paradise, but then *I* had nothing to do with translating *The Saint*!”

This was too much! The spirit of Puritan ancestors rose within me, and I determined to obey duty's call and make the acquaintance of the home of the much-talked-of Saint.

“ Say no more, my friend ! We leave by the next train ! ”

One last feed to the pigeons, one last farewell visit to Mark's mystic shrine, one last delicious, restful float through narrow *Calle* and down the Grand Canal, and then the station with its hateful noise and bustle, the whirl across country to Padua, and our arrival in Vicenza, in the late afternoon.

“ We will simply stroll about a little after dinner, and to-morrow forenoon will amply suffice for ‘ doing ’ the town,” I proclaimed, shutting Baedeker into my bag with a snap. My heart, alas, was still among the Lagoons, and I had been studying the guide-book, instead of looking out of the window, as I should have done.

“ A very lovely country, this we have been passing through,” said my companion as we left the station.

I raised my eyes. Before me stretched the green Piazza d'Armi, shaded by its towering chestnut trees and intersected by streams of glistening water. Beyond rose the snow-draped Alps, majestic, solemn, protecting, while the golden mists of sunset lay over all. Presently the carriage we had entered passed beneath an impressive triumphal arch, and the driver pointed with his whip to a fine wrought-iron gate, beyond which I caught a glimpse of a lovely temple-like edifice, set above a stream of clearest water.

“ The Loggia of Giardino Salvi, and over yonder is Porta di Castello.”

As we jolted onwards I heard the names of Ezzelino da Romano, Palladio and Scamozzi, and my eager glance swept from tower to palace in delighted and half-doubting amazement.

“ Oh ! I had no idea——”

“ Of course not,” said he by my side, who had been there before. “ No one ever has any idea.”

“ Why, the very hotel speaks of classic days ! That bobbing waiter should be wearing Greek drapery instead of a dress coat. Here we shall surely dine on nectar and ambrosia alone ! ”

A very substantial dinner, however, and a glass of that most delicious wine of Soave, better far than any Olympic brew, refreshed our drooping spirits, and then in the gathering darkness we wandered forth for an evening view of the quiet city.

The Corso with its palaces standing out in dim relief in the faint light of insufficient street-lamps ; a gay café that had taken possession of the roadway itself ; Piazza dei Signori in a soft sheen of moonlight ; the Cathedral throwing its deep, mysterious shadow across the spacious square ; Piazza delle Erbe with its frowning prison tower, and then, in a dark and narrow lane, a sudden blaze of light merry music and a strident voice—

“ *Biglietti ! Biglietti !* Tickets here for the finest cinematograph in Europe ! ”

My companion's face shone. He has a weakness for cinematographs, “ because,” he says, “ the people

cannot talk, which is such a blessed dispensation !” While he purchases the tickets I gaze upwards at the façade of the building, revealed by flaring, smoky, vulgar acetylene. A church, and sacred to Santa Faustina ! Statues of writhing Barocco saints, garlands of stucco flowers supported by swollen stucco cherubs ! What does this mean ? The next moment I find myself seated in a comfortable choir-stall—reserved seats, these—and the familiar notes of the Cake Walk fall upon my bewildered ear. So they have turned San Faustino into a place of public amusement—San Faustino the venerable, one of the seven chapels founded in the reign of Constantine, now tortured out of all semblance to its original self by the stucco-loving pomposity of the Renaissance !

All this erudition, however, I acquired later. On that memorable night I was as ignorant of things Vicentine as is he — who has studied his guide-book.

The early morning found us afoot, and as we stood on the sunny market-place, gazing up in wonder at Palladio’s glorious Basilica, and drinking in deep breaths of fresh sweet air straight from the hills, I no longer regretted my beloved Venice, and I knew that my act of sacrifice to duty had met with speedy and generous reward.

We had wisely set apart one whole hour for the picture gallery in the Museo Civico—I, having counted

the number of "starred" pictures, *knew* one hour would amply suffice.

"Time up already? Why, we have only just begun! And who in the world are these unheard-of Montagnas, Buonconsiglios, Fasolos and Maganzas, who have covered these canvases with glory?"

"*Cara mia!*" said my companion, with his superior and amused smile, "I suppose they belong to the school of Vicenza, but beyond that my knowledge of them ceases."

"Well, I intend to find out more about them, in course of time!" I declared. "Of course, we must leave to-day, but I shall return, and thoroughly acquaint myself with the beauties of this fascinating city."

"Then you will write a book, and inflict it upon a long-suffering public!" This with a quizzing air.

"I shall most certainly try to do so!" was my unexpected answer; and thus it was that the following chapters came to be compiled, that Signor Antonio Dall' Amico was begged to use his clever brush and pencil on their behalf, and that I myself made many delightful acquaintances and formed some lasting friendships in the city by the Bacchiglione, whither, dear English reader, I hope to induce you to repair.

Hospitality and kindness to the stranger are characteristics of Venetia. All to whom she appealed even for the smallest service took a respectful interest in the foreign "Signora" who went about with pencil and

note-book, and seemed pleased with what she saw. The smiling old dame in a close black straw bonnet, with a capacious reticule and thread mittens, who went so far out of her way to direct my steps ; the urchins with bare feet, bright eyes and tousled heads, ever anxious to carry my books, examine my " Waterman " or arrange a seat for me before some monument ; the quaintly genteel old beggar who waylaid me regularly every day, and who, instead of doleful looks and a whining appeal, had ever a bright smile and a deep court curtsy ready for me ; the pleasant-spoken market woman who sold me a few sous' worth of grapes, and wanted to carry them home for me ; the small children, sitting patiently in low chairs before the doors of squalid dwellings sucking highly-coloured sweets, and smiling stickily upon me as I passed ; the friendly, trilling canary that hung in a certain window near the Cathedral, and came to know me and my biscuit ; the burly peasant who, pleased with my admiration of his heap of silk-worms, proceeded to initiate me into the mysteries of sericulture, and pressed upon my acceptance a handful of glistening yellow rolls, " of the very finest Japanese breed " ; of all of these humble friends, who contributed so largely towards the pleasure of my visits, I cherish a happy and grateful memory.

All, high and low, were ready to assist and advise.

Senator Fogazzaro, from the first, took a lively and helpful interest in my humble efforts, and had it not

been for kindly words of encouragement and approval spoken in the very beginning by the great author, I fear I should long ago have flung down my pen in despair.

Monsignor Bortolan and Don Sebastiano Rumor at the Library answered many questions and sought out many books for my instruction ; the former director of the Museum, Professore Minozzi, the Curates of several parishes, and the venerable Mother Superior of the Misericordia, all gave me valuable information and aid, for which I here express my deepest gratitude.

And so to all the kind friends in Vicenza I send my grateful and affectionate greetings, and to the new friends I dare to hope my modest book may bring me I offer my experience and what little knowledge and understanding of things Vicentine I have acquired.

May many another come, like myself, to love and enjoy the home of The Saint, and of his learned and thoughtful creator !

MARY PRICHARD-AGNETTI.

BORDIGHERA.

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PART I

Part I

VICENZA IN HISTORY

IN that remote and nebulous epoch when the tribes of one region were ignorant not only of the doings and dealings, but of the very existence of their fellow-men beyond the mountain range or river that separated them from the vast unknown, a people called the Heneti wandered forth from Paphlagonia.

Had Asia Minor become over-populous, did the hand of a tyrant weigh heavy upon the land, or was it simply the fascination of the boundless, unexplored West that determined their migration ?—a fascination that, since the world began, has swayed the fiery, visionary East, luring its restless hordes ever forwards, enticing them ever towards the setting sun, leading them on, some to meet destruction, others to conquer and, themselves, destroy.

Upon the eastern coast of Italy, in the region known to us as Venetia, the Heneti encountered the Euganei, who were already in possession of the soil, and with them they strove. Who can picture that wild struggle ; who describe the clash of rude but deadly weapons, the fury and violence of primitive man, as one skin-clad body was hurled against another in the mad onslaught, as the invader rushed blindly forwards, wresting the soil from the enemy inch by inch, and

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by sheer brute force, sparing neither man, woman nor child, showing no mercy and asking for none !

The Euganei made a brave stand for possession of the region that had so long been their home, but their leaders were finally forced to yield, to gather together the weakened and scattered remnant of their people, and fly inland towards the rugged Alps, where Nature herself had prepared fastnesses fit to defy the assaults of an enemy even more formidable than the Heneti.

Where two rivers meet, where the Bacchiglione and the Retrone mingle their foaming waters and then roll onwards through plains that are rich and fertile, the bolder spirits among the conquered people chose to tarry, while their more timid brethren pressed northwards, the dread of the invader forbidding them to pause and make their home in this pleasant region, so gently encompassed by wooded hills, that offered protection from cruel winds and spoke of mild winters and early springs ; on this smiling plain, where the well watered fields were green and fruitful, and the groves lofty and rich in shade.

Whether the refugees from the coast found the country already inhabited, whether they mingled peacefully with those in possession, or drove them out as they themselves had been driven out, we cannot say ; but the Euganei were certainly not the first dwellers in this land of plenty, for traces of prehistoric races that have been brought to light in various parts of this district, weapons and implements of the stone age, of the age of bronze, and the remains of lake dwellings at Fontega, all point to the existence of previous generations in epochs so remote, so nebulous, that

contemplation of them causes the Euganian invasion to stand out clearly defined and firmly established, and to assume, in our eyes, the distinctness and precision of an event of comparatively recent date.

Despite the fertility of the soil and the admirable location of their new home, the life of these colonists was doubtless one of hardship, of toil and of ever-present danger. Much marsh-land lay between their settlement and Fontega. Fevers of a malarious nature sapped the strength of the people, while many of the boldest and strongest perished in the ceaseless struggle against the fierce wild beasts that infested the region.

Many dark centuries of savage living, of ignorance and strife, must have elapsed before the land was made to blossom and bring forth, before flocks of sheep, herds of cattle and troops of fiery horses began to graze upon the hill-sides and in the rich pastures of the plain. In course of time, however, the tribe came to possess many of the blessings which agriculture can bestow; then fields of yellow waving wheat surrounded their hamlets, the wool of their sheep was held in high esteem, their vineyards yielded wine of the finest, and the horses of their country ranked among the best.

Of their form of government we know little, but leaders or chiefs they surely had, and their region was certainly divided into communes.

Their religion, like that of all the aborigines of Italy, partook largely of the Greek creed, most of their gods being simply Greek divinities under different names. The Greco-Pelasgic invasions offer an explanation for this similarity, the second, which took place some

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seventeen centuries before Christ, bearing, perhaps, most directly upon it. The Pelasgi far surpassed the aborigines in culture—it is said they brought the alphabet into Italy, that they taught the natives to set up boundaries, and led them, by their own example, to respect and love the hearth-stone, thus laying the foundations of property and of family life; and their more spiritual creed exerted a softening influence upon the coarser religion of the conquered peoples. For many centuries, however, the rites remained savage, and cruel human sacrifices, bloody and loathsome ceremonies and superstitious practices held the advance of civilization in check. That they had no clear and well-defined conception of their deities is proved by the fact that they made no images to represent them. The gods were worshipped in the abstract, in their attributes alone, as it were. Thus a spear, or even a pole set upright, stood for Mars, while for centuries the sacred fire that burned in the temple of Vesta was the only representation of the goddess.

During the Pelasgic domination the face of the country seems to have undergone many great and startling changes. Mountains became volcanoes, and rained their deadly lava and scorching cinders upon the wretched hamlets at their base. Lakes disappeared; in many places gaping chasms yawned, whence emanated vapours so nauseous, so pestiferous, that the inhabitants of the region were forced to flee. Rumbings were heard, the earth shook, mountains rocked, and from Etna to Verona there stretched a chain of flame-vomiting volcanoes that filled the people with consternation and terror. How long these

conditions endured we do not know, but the story of this awe-inspiring epoch has come down to us through classic legend. The tale of the Giants' battles, when boulders were hurled through the air and mountains rent asunder; the story of Typhon, the Giants' brother, that hundred-headed monster darting flames from his serpent jaws, and howling the while with the strident voice of a hundred demons, that monster whom Jupiter finally crushed with his bolts and forced to dwell beneath Mount Etna—these and other legends were surely born of the people's horror and dismay during the period of convulsion. Many colonies founded by the Pelasgi were destroyed, thousands of their tribesmen perished, their power was weakened, and when the Etruscan appeared upon the scene his task of conquest was an easy one.

Whence did they come, these Etruscans, these pioneers of modern civilization? When their writings shall have been deciphered, and their inscriptions explained, then, perhaps, some light may be thrown upon the origin of this mysterious race.

The River Po checked the onrush of the new invader, but the whole of Italy felt the softening, civilizing influence of the artistic, beauty-loving stranger, and manners became less savage, religious rites less cruel, the vaguely-pictured deities of the past assumed more definite forms, and man became conscious of his own humanity. The Pelasgi succumbed rather to the moral superiority of the Etruscan than to his superiority in numbers and strength, and he made them his slaves.

Henceforth—though repeatedly checked by invasions and long tribal wars—progress advanced steadily

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if slowly, and there spread through the land the beneficent influences of a civilization which modern discoveries and research have taught us to respect and admire. New cities were founded; ancient settlements, like Vicenza, were strengthened and improved; mines and quarries were opened up, and commerce not only forced its way across the Alps, but trod out a path that stretched, in all probability, as far as the shores of the Baltic, whence amber was brought to northern Italy, to be passed on to Greece and the Orient.

In the sixth century before Christ, when Rome was young, the tribes of the far North and of the forests on the right bank of the Rhine rushed into Gaul, leaving ruin in their wake and driving the terror-stricken inhabitants before them. Forced from their own country, the savage Gauls poured into Italy, where, after a fierce struggle, they overcame the Etruscans, usurping their dominions, burning their cities, and demolishing the work of civilization they had so successfully accomplished. A party of Gauls led by Elitovius—the Whirlwind—forced the Etruscans back across the Po, and founded Brescia and Verona. They destroyed many ancient cities, but spared Vicenza, founding a city of their own on the opposite bank of the Retrone. Here they established their rule, the new city serving both as a menace to the Vicentines and as a safeguard against Padua, the frontier town of Venetia, which province the barbarians had failed to subjugate. This was due to the marshy and unstable nature of the soil, which was ill adapted to cavalry manœuvres; and without their cavalry the Gauls

were helpless. The new settlement was called *Berga*, and a memory of it still lingers in the name of the hills that rise to the south of Vicenza—the Colli Berici.

Four centuries came and went. The downtrodden natives retained enough of their former civilization to hold aloof from the savages who had descended upon them from the North, and who had never cast aside their barbarous customs and manners. Rome herself suffered siege and sack at the hands of these masters of northern Italy, but was never subjugated by the inferior people, of whom, however, she lived in permanent dread.

Castellini, that delightful chronicler of things Vicentine, relates an incident which, although possibly not entirely accurate as to detail, is too picturesque to be omitted here.—A certain king of Anglia, Monuerius by name, died after a long and peaceful reign, leaving two sons, Belgius and Brennus. Belgius, the elder, succeeded his father, and soon quarrelled with his brother, who was forced to flee the country. He betook himself to the court of Leginus, king of a Gallic people who dwelt in the country now known as Savoy, and there married the king's daughter, succeeding to the throne on the death of his father-in-law. Brennus now proceeded to wage war—and that successfully—upon the neighbouring peoples, and at last determined to lead a great multitude into much-invaded Italy. Now Brennus was no stranger to the sweetness of Italian wines, and, therefore, the prospect of a lengthy sojourn in the fair country beyond the Alps was doubtless as attractive to the king himself as to his half-savage followers. After several victories he subjugated Lom-

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bardly, and then crossed into Venetia, razing Vicenza to the ground. And victory accompanied his southward march, but having sacked Rome herself (B.C. 390) and reduced her, in part at least, to ashes, he was finally repulsed and overcome.

Some years later Brennus and his Gallic hordes carried terror into Greece and Asia Minor, and the chief met his death while busily engaged in stripping the Temple of Delphi of its treasures. Thus ended the adventures of "Brennus the Englishman," whom we must not confound with that other Brennus, "the Gaul," who invaded Italy some years later, and who, it is said, rebuilt many of the cities his English namesake had destroyed. Among other towns to profit by his advent was Vicenza, which he fortified and embellished.

Towards the close of the second century B.C. the last of the Gauls were overcome and expelled, and Rome, triumphant, declared that Nature herself had set the Alps as a barrier against them, and that complete annihilation would be their lot should they ever again attempt to invade Italy.

And now came the time of Rome's great prosperity, when her citizens amassed enormous fortunes and possessed slaves innumerable; when theatres, arenas, palaces, baths, aqueducts and temples were being built, and when every year witnessed the conquest of a fresh province.

In the year 225 B.C. the Veronese, the Vicentines, the Paduans and the Trevisans formed a league, and tendered their allegiance to Rome, an allegiance which was accepted, and which endured as long as the Empire stood. The allied cities sent twenty thousand



Photo Edue, Alinari

soldiers to help Rome in her struggle against Hannibal (B.C. 218), and in 188 B.C. Cisalpine Gaul was made a Roman province.

Vicenza is mentioned by several classical authors, sometimes as an unimportant town, sometimes as a small Roman fortress and encampment, and as such she undoubtedly profited by the flourishing condition of the Roman world, and was endowed with a certain number of temples, public buildings, theatres and baths. The temples of Venus and of Mars that are known to have existed in Vicenza, as well as that of Diana at the foot of Monte Berico, and of Apollo on the summit, where the Sanctuary now stands, were probably built during this period of peace and prosperity. An interesting account has come down to us of what we should now call a manufactory of waterproof cloth which existed in Vicenza towards the year 48 B.C. at the time the town was raised to the rank and granted the privileges of a Roman city by Julius Caesar, in consideration of the fact that her inhabitants had espoused his cause when he defied Pompey and the Republic, and crossed the Rubicon.

During the reign of Augustus Vicenza thrived and prospered. Literature and the fine arts began to be cultivated, and Cornelius Gallus, who flourished at this time, was a Vicentine, at least so the most ancient historians assure us, although more modern authorities are inclined to question the accuracy of this statement. Gallus, who was created governor of Egypt by Augustus, having been accused of extortion and conspiracy, was eventually disgraced and banished, and committed suicide in 26 A.D. It is a matter of history that Gallus

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loved the slave Lycoris, and celebrated her charms in his verses. Lycoris, however, forsook him for Mark Antony, and this unfortunate passion of the poet inspired two of Virgil's Eclogues. Now Castellini tells us that shortly before his day (he died in 1630 of the plague) a marble slab bearing an inscription in verse, was discovered near Vicenza, in a spot called Campo di Gallo. The inscription it was impossible to decipher in its entirety, but the name *Licori*, which we know occurs in the Eclogues above mentioned, was still plainly visible.

We ourselves are loth to question the accuracy of this evidence, for it pleases us to picture the stern soldier and remorseless governor in his moments of leisure, basking in the sunny smiles and surpassing beauty of the faithless Lycoris, as they wandered slowly, side by side, beneath a grape-laden pergola, or reclined among their silken cushions on the terrace of some villa of glistening marble that from the summit of Monte Berico dominated the rich and pleasant valley of the Bacchiglione.

But Vicenza was soon to be roused from her voluptuous dreaming, from her dallying with art and poetry. She was about to be stirred and fired by the inspired utterances of one who came in Peter's name to bring the truth; the truth that meant the downfall and destruction not only of all that was evil, but—alas!—of much that was beautiful in pagan civilization.

In the days of Claudius, the Greek Prosdocimus was appointed bishop, or rather apostle, of Padua (for in early times there were but three bishoprics, Rome, Antioch and Alexandria), and to him was confided the conversion of the province of Venetia. His

advent in Padua was marked by a miracle which rendered his task there a comparatively easy one. The sick and maimed had gathered at the city gate to receive him and implore, through him, the aid of the God in whose name he was come. The holy man, trusting firmly in the love and mercy of his Saviour, raised his hand and blessed the throng with the sign of the cross, and lo, the sick were healed, and the maimed were made whole.

Vitalianus, governor of Padua, upon being apprised of this miracle, summoned the saint to the couch upon which he had long lain and suffered. Prosdocimus prayed with him and exhorted him to receive baptism together with all the members of his household, and the great man was healed and became not only an ardent believer, but a champion of the Cross and of Christianity.

In Padua the Bishop founded a church which he dedicated to Saint Sophia, and then, entrusting his converts to the care of his disciples, he himself set forth to visit and christianize other parts of the province. Vicenza received him enthusiastically and sat in awed and breathless silence at his feet as the Greek delivered his message of redemption, in a flood of burning words. Thus in the year of Our Lord 48 was His standard raised in the city by the Bacchiglione. But many seasons of suffering and pain lay in store for the converts and their descendants, and much blood was destined to flow before the new faith should stand forth triumphant and dominate the land.

Prosdocimus, followed and aided by the enthusiastic Vicentines, proceeded to overthrow the idols and con-

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vert the temples that had contained them into Christian churches. Thus the temples of Venus, of Mars, of Diana and Apollo were stripped of their statues and sacrificial altars and solemnly consecrated to the worship of the true God.

While these events were taking place the famous grammarian Quintus Remmius Palemon, a native of Vicenza, was the tutor of the youthful Lucan, a nephew of Seneca, in Rome. It is principally through his connexion with the poet whose fame excited Nero's jealousy that Palemon's name has come down to posterity, but in his day he was greatly esteemed and respected, and his learned disputes with the hot-headed M. Antonius Liberalis, as well as with other famous literati, gave rise to much controversy, and amused the leisure of the aged and cruel Tiberius at his magnificent villa on the island of Capri.

This poet and grammarian who became the favourite of two emperors—Tiberius and Claudius—was of very humble origin. Suetonius tells us that, being a servant, he learned to read and write from his master's little son, when conducting him to and from school. The academy over which he presided in Rome was always well attended, and such were his eloquence and charm of manner that when he recited his verses in public he swayed his audience at will, moving them to mirth or tears by a single phrase, a single gesture.

Palemon was, however, insufferably vain and conceited, and was often heard to say that as Latin literature had begun with him, so with him it would end. His tastes were extravagant and luxurious in the extreme. Several times a day he would retire to his

richly appointed bath and revel in perfumed waters and costly unguents, thus recklessly consuming the large income he derived from his academy and from several estates which he himself farmed.

Some of his poems are still preserved in the Vatican Library, and he was also the author of a treatise on Roman weights and measures, as well as of several works on grammar and rhetoric. An edition of one of his essays on grammar was issued in Bâle in the seventeenth century, it having previously been attributed to the pen of Priscianus.

In his old age Palemon returned to his own province, and upon his death was interred at Monte Summano, as is proved by two inscriptions that were discovered in that region several centuries ago.

Another famous Vicentine was Alienus Cecina, who, in A.D. 69 incited the legions of north Germany to revolt against Galba, and it is to Tacitus that we owe our knowledge of his career. Being in command in the North at the time of the death of Galba and the proclamation of Otho by the legions of Italy, he espoused the cause of Vitellius, who had been proclaimed by the northern legions, and started to invade Italy by way of Helvetia. The inhabitants of that country, who were still in ignorance of the change of rulers, refused to obey the general of Vitellius, and a sharp struggle took place. Cecina conquered at last and, having subjugated the stubborn Helvetians, he crossed the Alps, leading his legions across fields of snow and through ice-bound ravines, while another general, Fabius Valens, marched southwards and entered Italy by the Mont Cenis.

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Nothing daunted by the difficulties with which his path was beset, Cecina pushed forwards, and rapidly crossing the province of Friuli, descended upon the cities of Cisalpine Gaul, forcing them to declare for Vitellius. His van-guard had handled several towns with great severity, but Vicenza had been spared out of respect for Cecina, who upon his arrival immediately checked the depredations of his soldiers, showing himself as mild and merciful in Italy as he had been cruel and remorseless in Helvetia.

Cecina, who was tall and handsome, always rode at the head of his army, dressed in a parti-coloured garment with flowing sleeves, as was the fashion in Gaul, while his wife, Salonina, mounted upon a fiery jennet at his side, was draped from head to foot in rich scarlet cloth, which at that time was probably the "*dernier mot de la mode*" in the country whence the lady came.

The majority of the provinces were in favour of Otho, who had immediately taken steps to ingratiate himself with them, but the country between the Alps and the river Po rose in support of Vitellius. The struggle that ensued was bitter, but Otho's army was routed at last near Bedriacum, in the neighbourhood of Cremona, whereupon the unhappy emperor committed suicide, declaring he would rather die than again plunge Italy into civil war. The senate now hastened to proclaim Vitellius emperor, but the legions that had supported Otho were determined to continue the struggle and punish the usurper. Vitellius hurriedly crossed into Italy and visited the battlefield of Bedriacum, that he might feast his eyes upon



the still unburied corpses of his enemies. He had little difficulty in overcoming the broken ranks of his opponents, and soon entered Rome in triumph.

His favourites, Valens, Cecina and the Asiaticus—a shameless panderer to the vices of this dissolute prince—were allowed to represent him in the senate and to transact all business for him, while he gave himself up to debauchery and revelry. Fabulous tales are told of the dishes that were concocted to tickle the gluttonous monarch's palate, and it is estimated that during the six months of his reign nine hundred million *sesterces* barely sufficed to cover the expenses of his table.

Meanwhile Vespasian, who was waging war against the Jews, had been proclaimed emperor by the legions of the East, and all the provinces from Illyria to Spain, and even as far as Britain, were in favour of his election. It was his intention that the legions of Illyria should advance to within a league of Aquileia, and there await further orders, while his fleet would starve the seaboard peoples into submission. He hoped thus to accomplish his end with little or no bloodshed. But the Illyrian legions were impatient of delay, and rushed down from the Alpine fastnesses, surprising and capturing Padua, Vicenza and Verona. Thus Rezia and Allemagnia were cut off from the main body of Vitellius' troops. Cecina, foreseeing the emperor's downfall, betrayed him and went over to Vespasian, taking the German legions with him. His desertion sealed the fate of Vitellius, who was seized by the mob and brutally murdered, and his body flung into the Tiber (A.D. 69).

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Cecina continued for some years in Vespasian's service, but Titus, finding him one night seated at supper with his Jewish favourite Veronica, became madly jealous of him, and caused him to be put to death.

More than half a century later Vicenza was visited by Hadrian, who spent seventeen out of the twenty-one years of his reign in travelling. The emperor must have been well pleased with the beautifully located and flourishing city, for he made her generous gifts, and the great *Teatro Berga* is believed to have been built by his order and at his expense.

As its name indicates this theatre stood in the more modern city, but the story that a royal palace of vast dimensions and great splendour rose beside it is entirely devoid of foundation. The buildings between Piazzetta San Giuseppe and Piazzetta dei Gualdi mark the circuit of the theatre, and many of these edifices rest upon the massive walls of the ancient structure, the underground passages having been converted into cellars, where the rich wine of the neighbouring hill-sides now mellows and ripens in its well-seasoned casks.

A part of the Teatro Berga was studied and examined by Giovanni Miglioranza during the excavations that were carried on in and after 1838. Miglioranza, a carpenter by trade, who did not learn to read and write until he was more than twenty years of age, became a skilful and learned architect, and, after many fruitless efforts, at last succeeded in persuading the city of Vicenza to provide for the excavation of as much of the theatre as it was possible to lay bare.

The greater part, however, is still buried beneath buildings many of which are themselves of great age and historical interest. Miglioranza was, nevertheless, able to make a plan of the edifice, a plan which reflected the greatest credit upon its author, and revealed his vast knowledge of the architecture of the ancients.

We know that Palladio studied and illustrated the theatre in or about the year 1556, and may therefore infer that at that time it was still comparatively well preserved. The frequent invasions of barbarous peoples, the frosts and storms of centuries, the inundations of the Bacchiglione, earthquakes, and several conflagrations of which some of the remains still bear traces, all contributed towards the ruin of this glorious monument. Medieval Vicenza drew rich treasures from amongst the ruins, and who can say how many of the pillars and columns we now admire in her churches once graced the wonderful theatre of Hadrian; how many of its statues were cast down and broken; how many flung into the kiln to be reduced to lime? The magnificent steps that lead up to the high-altar in the Duomo once adorned the Roman theatre. They are of the deep red marble of Verona that lends warmth of colour to so many edifices in this region.

The statues and fragments discovered and rescued by Miglioranza are now worthily housed in the beautiful *Museo Civico*. The mosaic pavements of the atrium and of the rooms devoted to this collection were made from fragments found among the ruins, and contain specimens of pink, green, red and yellow marbles, of cipollino, serpentino, basalt and porphyry.

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Many beautifully wrought capitals, some delicate bas-reliefs, carved blocks from the massive cornice, shattered columns of the rarest marbles, and innumerable fragments of statues, some colossal, some minute and dainty, bear pitiful witness to the glory and splendour of the past, while in the room on the left, besides the draped figure of a woman—a masterpiece of Roman art—we see three large statues which represent Hadrian, the empress Sabina Augusta, and her sister Matidia. The ancient inhabitants of Vicenza appear to have cherished an especial affection for this princess, for there exists an inscription which records the fact of her having contributed most generously towards the erection of some very important public building, which, we are told, was not completed until long after her death, and was inaugurated under Gordianus.

In the room on the right stands the bust of Giuseppe Miglioranza in the midst of the marble beauty which he loved and which his strenuous efforts and ardent longing brought to light once more after centuries of repose in the bosom of Mother Earth.

Several bridges and an admirable aqueduct were erected during the Roman period, but whether by Hadrian or before his time it is impossible to determine. The base of the campanile of the cathedral is of Roman origin, and is believed to have been used as a reservoir for the water which probably came from Caldogno, and was brought into the city by the aqueduct. Several arches that once formed part of this structure are still standing in the open country outside the Santa Croce gate. Decayed,

overgrown with ivy and flanked by willows, they still retain the majesty that distinguishes all Roman works, the stamp of greatness that the ancient builders have left upon all their creations.

We have already alluded to the Temple of Venus which is known to have existed in Vicenza. The sacristy of the church of Santi Felice e Fortunato now covers the spot where the temple once stood, and we may judge of its beauty and grace by the many fragments which adorn both church and campanile, and which are manifestly of pagan origin.

Far removed as they were from the centre of the Roman world, it would appear that the early Christians of Vicenza were molested neither in the practice of their religion nor in the erection of churches, for the first chapel, that stood in the immediate neighbourhood of the temple, was built as early as the third century, and dedicated to the saints Vito and Modesto, and this at a time when the persecuted Christians of Rome were seeking refuge in the Catacombs. Of this chapel no trace now remains save a few square feet of mosaic pavement directly in front of and below the high-altar of the present church. The mosaic is coarse and roughly executed, but it derives great archaeological interest from the fact that upon it are recorded the names of certain pious persons who contributed towards the erection of the chapel, and that for centuries it lay buried beneath a flight of marble steps leading up to the high-altar. Not until the beginning of the nineteenth century was it discovered and laid bare.

It is believed that this chapel was already in a

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ruinous condition in the fourth century, and that a second church was built near it—perhaps in direct contact with it—on the spot now occupied by the crypt, beneath the high-altar. It is evident that columns, marbles and carvings from the ruins of the Temple of Venus were used in the construction of this second edifice, and several of the slender columns at the back of the crypt still stand where they were placed in the fourth century ; but, as the capitals are far less delicately wrought than those usually found in pagan temples, we may conclude that they were re-modelled by Lombard artists to suit the new surroundings and the taste of the time. In this crypt, which is lighted by means of a series of graceful, deep-set windows, there rested for centuries the bodies of the martyrs Felice and Fortunato.

The time of persecution had come for the Christians of Venetia, and these two brothers, natives of Vicenza and Roman soldiers, suffered martyrdom at Aquileia, under Diocletian or one of his immediate successors.

The Christians of Vicenza sent a deputation to Aquileia to beg those in charge of the bodies to surrender them to their native town. The envoys hastened to the spot where the brothers lay dead, but the Aquileians refused to listen to their entreaties, and the parties wrangled until dawn when, fearing discovery by the pagans, they finally compromised, and it was decided that Vicenza should have the head of one brother and the body of the other, and thus the deputation was able to start homewards bearing the precious relics, which were deposited in the church of Santi Vito e Modesto.

When Charlemagne visited Vicenza we are told that he made rich presents to this ancient church, but the Hungarian invasion at the beginning of the tenth century reduced it to a pitiful state of ruin. The Benedictines, who had long been established in the neighbouring convent, fled before the invader, and the church, thus completely abandoned, was declared by Bishop Ridolfo in 975 to be *omni cultu monastico et divino officio destitutam et desolatam ob negligentiam pastorum et barbaras gentes quae in Italiam nuper irruerunt*.

For fifty years the fierce Hungarians continued to terrorize the unfortunate peninsula, appearing unexpectedly now here now there, dashing from place to place upon their fiery horses, plundering, extorting, burning, murdering and desecrating. When the country was at last freed from this barbarous scourge good Bishop Ridolfo set about restoring the ruined church of Vito and Modesto, and once more established the Benedictines in the monastery, entrusting to them the performance of the holy offices before the altars of the already venerable edifice. He not only confirmed all previous grants, both of lands and moneys, but greatly extended the privileges of the pious institution, the Abbot being bound by the terms of the episcopal decree to "bring unto Us or unto Our Successors, one candle, one loaf of bread and one flask of wine on every anniversary of the birth of Our Lord, on every Easter of Resurrection, and on every festival of the holy Martyrs Felice and Fortunato." Should the abbot fail in the accomplishment of this light duty, or he or any one else attempt to violate

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or alter the terms of this decree, the virtuous Bishop unhesitatingly declared that his lines in the next world would be cast with those of Judas, Dathan and Abiron, and that dying in a state of excommunication, eternal damnation would most certainly be his lot at the second advent of Christ.

The monastery became famous as a seat of learning, and the Benedictines remained in possession until 1806, when they were expelled in consequence of the Napoleonic edict, and the church became the property of the city.

But to return to Bishop Ridolfo. Fearing for the safety of the sacred relics the church contained he hid them behind the high-altar, in the crypt of the restored chapel, which he had dedicated to the holy brothers, and there they rested until the beginning of the nineteenth century, when they were discovered, removed from their great stone sarcophagus, and placed beneath the high-altar in the upper church. They have recently been restored to the crypt, and are exposed to view on certain festivals.

As in the days of the early Christians so to-day pious men and women have contributed towards the restoration of this chapel, and in imitation of the ancients, their names have been recorded in the modern mosaic that forms the pavement. With the exception of this mosaic the less said about the recent restorations the better !

The church of Santi Felice e Fortunato was many times restored by the Benedictines, who are believed to have been their own architects. Their efforts here, however, are certainly not calculated to arouse our

admiration or impress us with their knowledge of the laws of architecture. The heavy masses of stuccoed masonry that support the arches, enclose columns of cipollino and African marble, that were thus cruelly outraged by the Benedictines in 1624.

Of the ancient church one column only has been spared, and it now occupies a most important place in the history of architecture. We cannot do better than quote the words of Cattaneo concerning it. "The one pillar that has been preserved is of an order hitherto unknown to us, but it is certainly of Lombard origin. From what remains of it we may conclude that its base was originally cruciform, that is to say, it was formed by the union of two pilasters and two columns, the pilasters following the longitudinal axis of the nave, while the columns follow its transverse axis. In this group we have the earliest known attempt to produce a clustered column, and from it we learn that as early as the second half of the tenth century this characteristic element of Lombard church architecture was already in course of formation. Both the pilasters and half-columns (those at least on the side facing the narrow aisle) are crowned by a common capital of uniform pattern that embraces the entire group, and, while its rude carvings remind us of the ninth century, its conception and proportions prove it to be the precursor of many similar capitals in Lombard churches of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. . . . Thus Santi Felice e Fortunato in Vicenza offers the most ancient example known of pilasters alternating with columns, the most ancient specimen of a clustered column, the most ancient capitals of a pronounced Lombard type,

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and the most ancient example of a base furnished with spurs. This church is, therefore, a monument of very great importance, for it illustrates the transition from the barbarous Italo-Byzantine to the Roman (Composite) style."

Of the many remains of the Temple of Venus that were discovered in the crypt and housed beneath the portico of the church, several are worthy of attention. There are one or two exquisitely carved fragments of cornice, several slabs bearing inscriptions, some of pagan, others of early Christian origin. One very large slab shows the roughly carved names of the martyrs, and may have been the altar-stone of the temple, while the small spiral columns resting upon hideous frogs on either side of the great door, most certainly once graced the pagan edifice. The enormous stone sarcophagus in which the relics of the saints reposed for so many centuries, stands beneath this portico, while on the short wall on the right is a most delicately carved shield representing the familiar oak-leaves and acorns of the della Rovere family surmounted by the episcopal arms of Vicenza. It was undoubtedly executed for Giulio della Rovere, who became Bishop of Vicenza in 1560, and so exquisite is this piece of carving that a Mino da Fiesole might well have been proud to have created it.

The campanile—one of the finest in northern Italy—was probably begun in the third century when the first chapel was erected. The bell-tower was carried up somewhat higher when Bishop Ridolfo restored the church, and was finally finished by the Benedictines in 1160. It is a square brick tower with stone angles.



Photo Ed^{ne}. Alinari

THE PALAZZO DA SCHIO OR GOLDEN HOUSE

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The bell-chamber, which appears suspended in mid-air, is surrounded by a narrow terrace that rests upon massive corbels, small turrets crowning its four corners. The chamber with its double arched openings and marble ornamentations is most graceful in design and proportion, and is surmounted by an octagonal structure, crowned by a finely wrought and massive entablature and cornice, that may have formed part of the Temple of Venus.

For seven centuries and a half the campanile looked proudly down upon the city, witnessing many fierce struggles, and passing unscathed through many sieges, but in 1848 the cruel bombardment of the city by the Austrians left its trace upon the beautiful tower, stripping it of many of its ornamentations and defacing and cracking its venerable walls. One of the Austrian balls tore through the grated window of a chapel near the sacristy, and may still be seen firmly lodged in the opposite wall.

The Benedictine monastery, so long a centre of learning and the abode of peaceful, studious men, now rings with the shrieks and violent outbursts of the hopelessly insane, and the imbecile lolls, and mouths his inarticulate utterances in the lovely cloisters where the thoughtful friar once mused and prayed.

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In less than a century Vicenza was twice visited by the plague. The first time, in the year 167, the awful scourge was brought into Europe from Egypt, by the troops of Verus, and would appear never to have been completely stamped out, for in A.D. 252 the country was once more ravaged by the same dread malady,

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many towns being almost entirely depopulated. Such was the fate of Vicenza. Of her inhabitants those who were able to do so fled to the country, while many of those who remained in the city perished miserably. The down-trodden Christians declared this scourge to be a punishment for the persecution which they had suffered under Trebonianus Gallus, but by what strange reasoning they reconciled to this theory the fact that there were full as many victims among the Christians as among the pagans, we cannot say. Nature herself added to the horror and misery of this era. A terrible earthquake occurred in or about the year 268, which threw down or seriously injured many fine buildings in Vicenza, and for several days the sky was so dark that those who were obliged to venture into the streets carried torches.

Upon the heels of the plague there followed close another scourge—the wrangling strife of no less than thirty tyrants who all aspired to the purple, and against whom Gallus the emperor was impotent. These chiefs, who were busy fighting and quarrelling among themselves, were at no pains to protect the country against the invasions and devastations of the barbarous tribes of Germans, who would often dash across the border, especially in the autumn, when the harvest had been gathered in and the grapes pressed. The marauders would thieve, destroy and revel to their hearts' content, and finally, having satiated themselves and seized upon as much plunder as they were able to transport, would once more disappear into the North.

Vicenza came in for her share of suffering at the

hands of the tribes that poured across the Brenner. One of these expeditions pressed southwards as far as Ravenna, but the border provinces suffered most cruelly, and in A.D. 269 both Verona and Vicenza were sacked and ravaged by the savage Germans from beyond the Alps. The invaders were, however, driven back by Flavius Claudius, a virtuous emperor, whose name stands forth resplendent from amongst the long list of cruel, dissolute, rapacious tyrants who for so many years had disgraced the empire.

Flavius Claudius died of plague in Pannonia in the year 270, and was succeeded by Aurelian. In the following year Vandals and Goths invaded the northern provinces, and once more Vicenza was put to the sword and the surrounding country laid waste. But Aurelian was prompt to march against the barbarians, and after four bloody battles in which the emperor himself is *said* to have slain no less than eight hundred of the enemy, the country was again set free and peace restored.

Unfortunately for Italy and the empire Aurelian was assassinated near Byzantium in the year 275. Nevertheless years of peace and prosperity ensued under the gentle rule of the aged and virtuous Tacitus, the firm hand of Probus and the short but triumphant reign of Carus. Then came Carinus, who once more plunged Rome into debauch and shame, but who was soon defeated and put to death by Diocletian (A.D. 285).

During the half-century that had elapsed since the last great persecution of Christians under Valerian their numbers had greatly increased, many bishops had

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been ordained, many churches built, and Christian influence was beginning to make itself widely felt. The Church was becoming a power within the state, and a menace to its very existence. This new faith must either be allowed to dominate the empire, or it must be stamped out. Diocletian chose to essay this latter alternative, and inaugurated the tenth persecution, the longest and most bloody of all, the Era of Martyrs. The first victims fell in the year 303—the last, under Diocletian's successors, in 310.

Two young physicians of Arab origin, but who resided in Vicenza, suffered death during this persecution. These brothers, Leonzio and Carpofo, travelled fearlessly from end to end of the province, healing the sick, comforting the afflicted, assisting the martyrs and proclaiming themselves, both by word and deed, followers of Jesus Christ. They were finally seized and put to torture, but they bore their torment with smiling faces, and were repeatedly rescued from the hands of their persecutors by awe-inspiring miracles. They were at last decapitated, several ancient chroniclers asserting that Eufemia and Innocenza, sisters of the young physicians, shared their martyrdom.

In the town of Concordia eighty-nine Christians were executed in one day, and the ancient church of Santi Vito e Modesto in Vicenza received the remains of San Floriano, together with the mutilated bodies of four virgins and five *Innocentini*, or young children. Saint Sigisbaldo, whose relics are venerated in Cremona, was a native of Vicenza. Of Saints Felice and Fortunato we have spoken elsewhere.

Under Constantine peace reigned supreme, and an era of happiness began for the Christians. In Vicenza, as in many other cities, churches were built—the Cathedral was probably founded at this time—hospitals were erected and parishes established. In 313 Constantine himself visited Vicenza, and was received with great rejoicing. In honour of the vision of the Cross that had induced the emperor to place this emblem upon his banners, the Vicentines hastened to proclaim the Cross the symbol of their city, and a column was erected in memory of this event. The city was now divided into seven parishes, each parish being supplied with a church. Among these were Santo Stefano and San Giacomo, and while the first has been so often and so thoroughly restored as to appear a modern structure, the second is still the edifice of the first centuries, and its rude, unadorned exterior bears witness to the simplicity and rugged nature of Christianity in those early times, when Mother Church still retained much of the austerity of the Apostles' precepts and teachings.

St. Vincent the Spaniard had suffered martyrdom in Spain in the year 305, and under Constantine the Vicentines appointed him their patron saint, being guided in their choice simply by a similarity of names. A church was at once built in his honour on the spot where Palladio's Basilica now stands, but this edifice being destroyed by the troops of Frederick II, the present church of St. Vincent was erected on the opposite side of the Piazza, in 1387.

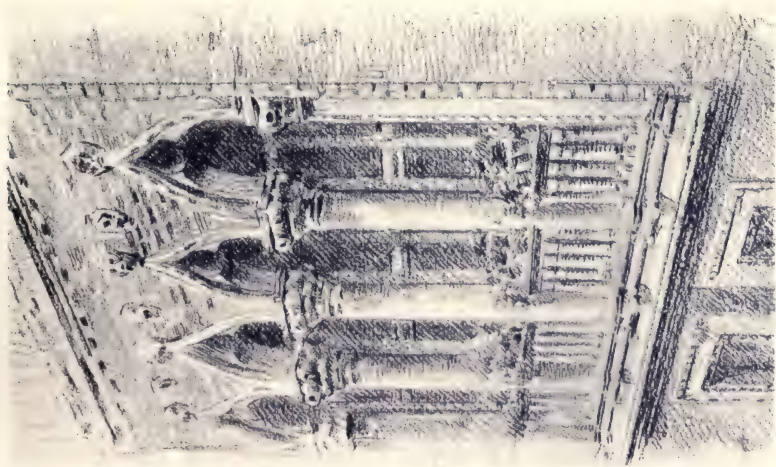
The peace and prosperity which had begun under Constantine continued for many years. The new faith

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took stronger hold than ever of the hearts of Vicenza's virtuous citizens, and, following the teachings and exhortations of their pious bishops, many of whom shine as bright stars in the glorious constellation of the Saints, the city joyfully gave her sons and daughters to the newly founded convents, built chapels and sanctuaries and ministered lovingly to the needs of the poor and suffering within her gates.

A mighty link in the chain of circumstances that led to Rome's ecclesiastical supremacy was forged by Constantine at Aquileia in the year 326. Vicenza, together with other towns of Venetia, had sent out ambassadors to welcome the emperor, and these ambassadors being gathered together in solemn assembly, Constantine rose and, amidst the breathless silence of the throng, proclaimed a law that has echoed through the centuries—the decree that established the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome. While it raised him to the highest place, this decree bound the successor of St. Peter forever to the city of the Apostle's choice. Constantine it was who made the Pope a prisoner in Rome ; and should the moral fetters that were then laid upon him be one day rent asunder, the Church must feel the shock even to her very foundations, and that disintegration which must of a surety result would inevitably precipitate the downfall of the marvellous and venerable structure.

Constantine's famous decree further established that all who should seek refuge within the precincts of a church or chapel should find protection, for, at the foot of God's altar neither the hand of the law nor the sword of an enemy might prevail. The people



WINDOW IN THE PALAZZO LONGHI



A BALCONY IN VICENZA (16TH CENTURY)

were admonished to obey the bishops in all matters, to grant them freely not only moneys and lands, but willing aid and service as well. The emperor further ruled that priests be chosen from amongst the lower classes, only so many as were truly necessary for the service of the Church being admitted to ordination, in order that the secular body be not sensibly weakened by the withdrawal of over much youthful energy and strength.

To have conceived and promulgated such a decree as this the emperor must already have been a Christian at heart, although he had not as yet received baptism, and we cannot but marvel at the incongruity of his attitude at Aquileia when we reflect that he was come hither direct from Pola, where he had committed the great crime of his life, and stained his hands with the blood of his own son. But Constantine's attitude towards Christianity and the laws he established in her favour were inspired rather by policy than by conviction and sentiment, and history justifies us in the belief that such was most assuredly the case at the time of the Aquileian assembly.

Be this as it may, the fair province derived much benefit from the far-sighted dispensations and wise administration of Constantine. Aquileia became the residence both of a Prefect and of a Patriarch, who was the superior of all other bishops in the province. The fruits of firm, judicious government and of regular and orderly administration soon began to ripen on all sides, and had Constantine's successors but trodden in his footsteps how vastly different and how much less terrible might the face of history have

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become ! But alas ! his unworthy heirs undid the work he had accomplished, swept aside his salutary reforms and institutions, and again the empire was rent by internal strife.

We catch a glimpse of Vicenza once more sending her ambassadors to Aquileia to swear allegiance to the fratricide Constans, and kiss the hand that had done the horrid deed ; and when Constantius emerged from the river of blood through which he had struggled to the throne, after his brother's murder in Rhætia, our city calmly and resignedly transferred her allegiance to the victor ; thus, by wary and prudent submission, ensuring her own peace and immunity from persecution.

In the year 361 Julian the Apostate began his brief and stormy reign, and Vicenza at once and unreservedly acknowledged him her lawful overlord, thus avoiding a siege and sack such as her less acquiescent and politic neighbour Aquileia was destined to suffer at the hands of the Apostate's captains.

Valentinian on his way to Rome in the year 365 to take possession of the throne of the Western empire, tarried in the province of Venetia, and was received by Vicenza with great pomp and solemnity, the people and clergy joining in joyous thanksgiving and in the chanting of a jubilant *Te Deum* that the Lord had lifted from them the yoke of the hated Apostate, and scattered the threatening cloud of persecution that had hung over the Christian world. The Vicentines caused a column to be erected in memory of Valentinian's visit, which, with its flattering inscription, still exists in the Castello di Brendola.

While Valentinian reigned in the West, Valens, lord of the East, had begun "in the wickedness of his black heart, to lavish favours upon the abominable Arians"—so speaks a pious and venerable chronicler—"and it was to punish this prince's impiety that God permitted the savage Huns to come forth from their barren and mountainous country. Thus was the downfall of the Roman Empire brought about, and our unhappy Italy plunged into long and terrible misery." A delightfully edifying and satisfactory explanation this of the advent of the terror-bringing tribes! The immediate effect of this migratory movement was to drive a vast horde of Goths across the line that divided them from the Empire, and the treachery and want of good faith of the Romans in dealing with these semi-barbarians was the cause of endless suffering and much bloodshed.

The great controversy between Arians and Athanasians was now raging hotly, and in 381 a council was held in Constantinople, followed almost immediately by another in Aquileia, at which both Gratian and the youthful Valentinian II were present, St. Valerian being bishop of the ancient city at the time. Many historians have maintained the supremacy of Arianism in Vicenza at this period, thus accounting for the absence of her bishop at the Council of Aquileia, whither Milan's great patron, Ambrose, as well as many other learned theologians from all parts of the Empire, had hastened, to discuss the best means of stamping out the heresy they so heartily abhorred. Recent excavations near the church of Santi Felice e Fortunato have brought to light certain carvings

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which would appear to confirm the theory of the predominance of Arianism in Vicenza. A sarcophagus has been laid bare which shows the monogrammatic cross composed of the Greek *tau* surmounted by the *rho*, a sign frequently occurring upon coins minted in the Orient under Constantine, and which must not be confounded with the monogram of Christ often found upon early Christian monuments in the western world. This is only the fifth example of the monogrammatic cross which has been discovered in the Occident, and here we see it placed between the *alpha* and *omega*, which letters, standing as they do for the divinity of Christ, were used in the fourth century as a protest against the errors of Arianism.

The Council of Aquileia, however, would appear to have contributed but little towards the solution of the vexed question, and at the close of the assembly Valentinian, weary of the society of wrangling prelates and pedantic theologians, started upon a solemn progress through the province of Venetia, tarrying some days at Vicenza, where he was, we are assured, most heartily welcomed by both factions. He was probably accompanied by his mother, the beautiful Justina, the first of that line of fair and powerful princesses who, for so many years, were important factors in the history of the Empire.

In 383 Maximus the Spaniard defeated and slew Gratian, and was proclaimed emperor by the legions; but five years later they betrayed and murdered him in Aquileia, where he lay with his following, while the people of Venetia, who had risen up against him and joined their forces to those of Theodosius, clamoured

for his blood beneath the city's walls. Hereupon St. Appolonius, Bishop of Vicenza, took the oath of allegiance to Theodosius and Valentinian in the name of the ever-loyal city, and once more peace and quiet reigned after the din and horror of civil war. The three emperors—for Theodosius had summoned into Italy his son Arcadius, lord of the East, and his brother-in-law Valentinian—visited Vicenza in the spring of 391, and took up their abode within the precincts of the ancient Teatro Berga. Many were the entertainments and feasts that took place in honour of the imperial guests; many the hunting parties that rode merrily forth in the blue mists of the May mornings, to return, heavy-laden and triumphant, as the sun dropped behind the glowing hills! But the days were not all spent in feasting and merry-making, and the emperors found time to discuss and publish no less than three important decrees during their brief sojourn in Vicenza.

The first of these decrees modified the laws already existing concerning the sale of lands, and sanctioned their cession to foreigners, which had hitherto been strictly forbidden. The second made it a crime for any one to remain in ignorance, or feign ignorance, of the laws of the land, while the third decree prescribed severe punishments for soldiers and others who should pollute the waters of rivers and lakes, or show themselves naked upon the banks.

Upon his return to Constantinople Theodosius left Valentinian and his mother Justina to govern the western world, but the Frankish general Arbogastes, who had greatly distinguished himself at Aquileia,

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having slain the son of Maximus with his own hands, was now striving to acquire supremacy over the youthful emperor, and Valentinian soon began to chafe and fret under the humiliating tyranny of the pagan Frank. He determined at last to rid himself of Arbogastes, but within a few weeks of their final rupture (392) Valentinian was found dead in his bed, and his untimely end was instantly and unhesitatingly ascribed to the former favourite or his partisans. The all-powerful Frank now conferred the imperial purple upon the Rector Eugenius, through whom he proposed to control the empire. But Justina and her beautiful daughter Galla, wife of Theodosius, naturally brought their influence to bear upon the emperor, and persuaded him to seek revenge for the murder of their son and brother, by attacking Eugenius and Arbogastes. While Theodosius was organizing and preparing the proposed expedition, the empress Galla died, leaving a daughter, Galla Placidia, whose beauty surpassed that of her lovely mother, and who was destined to play a leading part in the great drama of her century.

Again, as in 388, Theodosius and his army turned their faces westwards, and encountered Eugenius on the banks of the Frigido, not far from Aquileia, the scene of their earlier victory. A great battle took place, which proved a triumph for Theodosius, and earned for him the title of the Great. The pagan faction was now definitely overcome, and the absolute supremacy of the Church of Christ was soon established throughout the empire. Through Theodosius, who had always been a strenuous opponent of Arianism, Athanasius triumphed in the oriental as in the occi-

dental world, and the mighty victory not only imbued the Church with fresh courage and ardour, but stimulated her to vigorous and all-pervading activity. This was the era of the Fathers ; great saints and scholars arose, and gave voice to truths that will abide for ever. Basil, the father of monasticism ; Gregory Nazianzus and that other Gregory of the Nicene creed ; Ambrose and his convert Augustine ; the violent Jerome ; the golden-mouthed John and holy Martin of Tours, all shed their effulgent light upon this glorious epoch, while Damasus, Bishop of Rome, laid the foundation for the future power of the popes and ensured the impunity of the clergy by declaring that henceforth only ecclesiastics might sit in judgment upon ecclesiastics.

Theodosius, the last emperor worthy of the title, died in Milan in 395, his departing soul carrying with it into eternity the fervent blessing of holy Ambrose, who had become his beloved friend.

When the strong hand was withdrawn that had guided the great empire so wisely and so skilfully, and the master-mind that had dominated and reconciled the many warring elements that distracted the Roman world had been summoned to its rest, there dawned a period of strife and suffering, of bloodshed and deadly fear, of horror and darkness such as fancy shrinks from picturing. Alaric and his Goths, baffled in their attempts to seize Constantinople, determined to invade Italy, and, aided by the fierce Radegaisus, possessed themselves of many cities in the north—Vicenza among others—before the arrival of Stilicho, who checked their progress and repulsed them for the time being. His victory at Pollentia, which was indeed the last

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great victory of the Roman arms, was followed by the last Roman triumph. Honorius, Stilicho's youthful son-in-law, was brought to Rome from his home in strongly fortified Ravenna, and carried to the Capitol in the gorgeous car of victory, while the people acclaimed the prowess of an emperor who accepted praises that by right belonged to Stilicho. It was during the gladiatorial contest that formed part of this triumph that the awe-inspiring voice of the monk Telemachus rang out in the amphitheatre, bidding the bloody and loathsome strife to cease in the name of Christ. The monk was instantly seized by the enraged populace and torn to pieces, but the voice of the Church had been heard loudly protesting against the crowning shame of paganism, and the blood of the martyr had not been shed in vain, for the gladiatorial sports were ended for all time.

The noise of the triumph had hardly died out when the relentless Radegaisus returned across the Alps, followed by a vast horde of Vandals, Suevi, Burgundians and Goths, and once more Vicenza, together with Aquileia, Concordia, Padua, and numerous other towns, was pillaged and almost completely destroyed. Not until the fierce invaders were within sight of Florence was their blighting progress checked and their leader slain by Stilicho.

The indolent and incapable Honorius soon began to resent the great commander's rapidly increasing popularity, and lent a willing ear to his rivals and slanderers, who accused him of secret intrigue with Alaric and other barbarians. Notwithstanding the double tie of kinship that existed between them—for

upon the death of his first wife Honorius had wedded a second daughter of Stilicho, thereby openly defying the authority of the Church, which condemned such a union—the emperor, in 408, sanctioned not only the removal, but the execution of the only leader capable of coping with the barbarians, and of saving Rome from the inglorious siege to which Alaric now hastened to subject her.

It was at this point that the Vicentines, fully awake to the danger that threatened the country and to the incapacity of the miserable Honorius, formed a defensive alliance with the inhabitants of Feltre, Este, Monselice and Montagnana, and appointed one Caius Azius as their protector against the savage peoples who had so often devastated the unhappy province. The ancestors of this Caius the Decurion had come into Venetia from Rome, and the family, which had become powerful and prosperous, was known as the Azii Romani. The name may still be found upon many ancient monuments both in Vicenza and throughout the province.

Caius gladly accepted the post of protector, and immediately set about fortifying the allied towns, regulating their disordered finances and organizing a small army, at the head of which he was soon forced to dispatch his son Aurelius to meet Alaric, who was once more on his way into Italy. Here we have an example of early diplomacy, for Aurelius, instead of risking battle with the Goths, arranged a meeting with their chief, and by means of some slight concessions, the payment of a small sum of money, and the promise (faithfully maintained) of a certain

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quantity of victuals for the troops, obtained the goodwill of the dreaded warrior, and the speedy withdrawal of the barbarians from the delighted province. Thus, while Rome herself was suffering the horrors and humiliations of a terrible siege, Vicenza and her allies were rejoicing in the peace and security which their dauntless protector and his valiant son had earned for them.

After Rome's downfall Alaric marched southwards, but fell ill and died at Cosenza, and it will be remembered how his warriors turned the stream of the river Bionzo out of its course and laid the dead chieftain in a tomb they had erected in the bed of the torrent. This, it would appear, was no uncommon custom among the Goths, for ancient chroniclers tell of a tomb braced against one of the massive granite supports of the Ponte Furo in Vicenza; it was raised six steps above the river's bed, and bore, "so say those who dive," traces of a rough inscription. Tradition points to this hidden sepulchre as the resting-place of some Gothic chief who perished in or near the city during one of the numerous sieges which the unfortunate town underwent. Whether the venerable tomb still exists beneath the foaming surface of the rushing Bacchiglione, deep down among the foundations of the present bridge, which was erected in 1266 upon the ruins of an earlier structure, and restored in 1588, it is impossible to say, but it is certainly improbable that the builders of the twelfth century would have refrained from exploring and plundering such a monument had they been aware of its existence.

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During the forty years that stretched from the death of Alaric to the coming of Attila the stage of history is peopled by men and women whose figures are encompassed by a haze of tradition and romantic legend, and whose very names evoke scenes and incidents upon which he who seeks the picturesque in history still loves to dwell.

One prominent figure of this period is that of Honorius, the feeble, wavering emperor, now dallying with his pet fowl "Roma"; now defying, now striving to conciliate, the barbarians who threatened on all sides; ever fluctuating, ever changing, ever betraying, until at last he is laid to rest in Ravenna's famous mausoleum, leaving his sister Placidia mistress of all.

An enthralling figure is that of Galla Placidia, the lovely prisoner who charms and enamours her Gothic master Ataulf, and, yielding to the passionate devotion and half-savage wooing of the magnificent barbarian, willingly follows him into Gaul, riding by his side on that mysterious march across Italy, and finally wedding him at Narbonne. We can picture the fifty youths kneeling before the beautiful Roman princess who has become a Gothic queen, and offering her a hundred precious cups, brimming with the gold and gems the Goths had wrested from Rome; we can see her standing by the tiny grave of her infant son, the fruit of her romantic union, while rough Ataulf weeps beside her and seeks to soothe her bleeding heart. Again, we may fancy her following her lord into Spain; then hiding in terror from his assassins, and later forced to walk twelve weary miles, barefoot, in the burning dust, before his rival and

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successor, who looks down upon her from his restless steed, half in hatred, half in lustful admiration. We may follow her on her return journey to her beloved Ravenna; we may witness her unwilling marriage to Constantius, who has loved her long and faithfully; and again see her before us in joyous maternity, clasping the future Valentinian III to her happy breast. After her five-and-twenty years of indirect reign through the weak Valentinian, we think of her as being laid to rest in the little mausoleum where many of us have stood and marvelled at the glorious mosaics; where her lofty, passionate, sorrow-tossed spirit still seems to linger; where something of her beauty still seems to hover, to have passed into the beauty of the spot.

The protectors of Vicenza were all descended from Caius Azius whose son Aurelius had received the proud title of Count of Vicenza. We read of his journeying into distant Bavaria on a mission of pacification, and returning successful and laden with honours, and accompanied by a fair-haired bride. The gentle lady was received by Vicenza with great rejoicing, and held always in much love by her faithful subjects, but she died at the end of four years of happy married life, leaving to her lord a sweet memory and two sturdy little sons, Tiberius and Orestes, who in time inherited their father's honours and position.

Under Valentinian III their power and domains were increased. Tiberius, the elder, was lord of Vicenza, Feltre, and several less important centres, while Orestes ruled at Monselice and Este. Tiberius wedded Gioconda, daughter of Lelio the lord of Padua, by

whom he had two sons, but as they were mere children at the time of their father's death, their uncle Orestes acted as regent for many years, proving himself a wise and just ruler.

But now, in the year 451, rumours of war and of threatened invasion began to reach the peaceful citizens of Vicenza. Attila had crossed the Rhine, had sacked and then destroyed the towns of Metz and Rheims; Paris had been saved as by a miracle from a like fate, and there were wonderful tales of the courage and ardour of a holy woman called Genevieve. The Vicentines turned sick with horror when messengers brought news of the great battle that had taken place near Châlons; when they told how Theodoricus, king of the Visigoths, had forfeited his life, and Aëtius the Roman had fought like a fiend; how the brook that crossed the field had become a blood-red torrent, and the spirits of the slain had hovered in the night above the scene of their undoing, and once more engaged in ghostly battle. The apprehension of what the future might hold in store for Italy was too great to allow the Vicentines to rejoice at the defeat of the barbarians, and not until Attila and his savage horde were known to be far on their way into Pannonia did the anxious citizens breathe freely once more.

Other cities, meanwhile, had followed Vicenza's example and appointed a protector with the title of Count. Thus there already existed in Italy many small and virtually independent states, a condition of things that gave rise in later years to endless strife and bloodshed, and may be said to have endured until Victor Emanuel entered Rome at the head of his victorious army.

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In the days of Attila, however, the rival states were well aware that their only safety lay in uniting their forces against the danger that threatened the empire, for no one doubted the Hun's intention of renewing his attack, and all looked forward with dread to the coming of the *Flagellum Dei*. The evil day was not far distant, for in 452 the Huns once more poured forth from Pannonia like a mighty torrent, carrying all before them, until strongly-fortified and bravely-defended Aquileia checked their progress for a time. The siege of this city lasted several months, and Attila, it is said, was about to withdraw in despair, when one morning the storks that had their nests upon the lofty towers of the stronghold rose in a body and flapped slowly away. To the superstitious Hun this was an omen, a welcome sign—the gallant defenders must be about to surrender, the city about to fall, or the faithful storks would never have deserted her. And now the end had come indeed. Once more the walls were stormed, the gates attacked with renewed fury, and Aquileia was taken and razed to the ground, hardly a trace remaining to mark the spot where the proud city had stood.

Concordia, Feltre, Padua, Treviso and many other towns were sacked and partially destroyed, but Vicenza, relying upon the strength of the fortifications with which her protectors had endowed her, determined to make a bold stand against the furious onslaught of the savage invaders. That the little town should venture to offer resistance exasperated the chieftain beyond measure, and he swore to wreak dire vengeance upon her unfortunate inhabitants.

It was with sinking hearts and after a brave struggle that the citizens finally beheld the nightmare faces of the enemy glaring at them fiercely through a great breach in the massive walls. Shrieking women rushed madly through the streets, frightened pale-faced children clinging to their skirts; the rich hastened to fling their treasures into the wells that adorned the courtyards of their houses, while the poor caught up their few belongings and sought shelter within the churches, whose portals were quickly flung to and barricaded by priests who prayed ceaselessly with white and trembling lips.

Not a single Hun had as yet been able to enter the city, when a brave youth named Marius appeared upon the scene, and, followed by a handful of companions, hurled himself through the breach and attacked the besiegers with maniac fury. Many of the sallow-faced fiends had fallen beneath the blows of this valiant band before the barbarians were sufficiently recovered from their astonishment to surround and overpower the youthful Vicentines. Then the Huns, shrieking their blood-curdling battle-cry, stormed through the breach, treading Marius' mutilated body under foot. Of the horrors that ensued our modern minds would find it difficult to form a conception; suffice it to say that all of the inhabitants who failed to hide themselves or make good their escape were most cruelly murdered; that, not content with sacking and plundering, the barbarians set fire to many edifices and demolished others with axe and hammer, and that, when they finally withdrew, the city was but a reeking heap of stones and ashes.

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The fugitives from Vicenza, following the example of the inhabitants of Aquileia and of other towns that had been visited by the all-destroying Hun, fled to the islands in the lagoons that surround *Rio Alto*, where a colony had long existed, and thus was formed the nucleus of the glorious Venetian Republic, which was destined to preserve her liberty longer than Rome herself, and to save Europe from the invading Turk.

Attila, meanwhile, pursued his course southwards, leaving ruin and desolation in his wake. He was obliged to travel rapidly, in order to provide fresh fields of plunder for his all-devouring followers, and many towns suffered the fate of Vicenza, while the rural districts were laid waste and Rome herself trembled. Aëtius, although he had not as yet appeared on the scene, was a perpetual menace to the Hun; Marcian had threatened to send succour from Constantinople; grim famine loomed in the near distance, and Attila's army was ravaged by disease. Influenced by all these circumstances, and living ever in superstitious dread of the vengeance of the Christians' mysterious God, the wild chieftain was in a fit state to yield to Pope Leo's appeal on behalf of Rome, and, haunted by the awe-inspiring vision of Peter and Paul his heated brain had suggested, he hastily withdrew into Hungary, leaving the Romans to chant solemn *Te Deum*, and the mighty Leo to the prosecution of his own great scheme. This pope was undoubtedly far in advance of his century—a shrewd, far-seeing statesman we should call him to-day—and withal a God-fearing, pious prelate, going for inspiration straight to the fountain-head of truth, straight to Christ Himself,



Photo Ed^{ne}. Alinari

CATHEDRAL—WEST FRONT



and paying but slight honour to the army of miracle-working saints which had already begun to sway the Christian world.

Meanwhile the Vicentines who had fled to the islands of the Venetian lagoons were beginning to weary of their exile, and to sigh for the home which Attila had laid waste. The Hunnish chief lay dead in Hungary; Aëtius, who had threatened to become an all-powerful tyrant had perished at the hands of Valentinian, and much tried Italy now hoped to enjoy a period of peace and prosperity. The season seemed propitious, and the exiles, under their lord Marcellus, once more crossed the shallow lagoons and set their faces homewards. A desolate and weary company it must indeed have been that halted one night in early spring within sight of the charred and broken remains of their former home, and when at dawn next day they set out with Marcellus to explore the ruins, their hearts must have turned sick within them at sight of the few half-naked, hungry and emaciated beings who, having escaped death at the hands of the Huns, had remained among the crumbling walls of their city, and now crept forth to welcome their fellow-townsmen. But Marcellus was brave and dauntless, and soon the little band was hard at work rebuilding, clearing away débris, and tilling the fruitful fields that stretch between the two rushing rivers.

The news of the murder of Valentinian came in 455, filling the struggling colony with gloomy forebodings. Soon it was rumoured that the Vandals were making ready to invade the unhappy peninsula, and the people hearing how Eudoxia, widow of Valentinian, had been

forced into an unholy union with her husband's murderer, firmly believed her guilty of having summoned the barbarians to wreak vengeance upon the infamous usurper. Once more Leo issued forth from Rome to meet a savage chieftain and plead for his beloved city, but Genseric the Vandal was less simple, less easily impressed, less superstitious than Attila the Hun, and, entering the city, he and his wild clansmen plundered and sacked for fifteen days. At last they withdrew and set sail for Africa, taking with them not only the treasures of both pagan and Christian Rome, but hundreds of prisoners as well, whom they sold as slaves in the market of Carthage. Eudoxia and her two daughters were among the prisoners. The elder wedded Genseric's son, but Placidia, the younger, shared her mother's captivity for seven years, when they were finally surrendered to the Emperor of the Orient, and sent to Constantinople.

Hardly had the Vicentines recovered from the horror that had paralysed them at thought of a fresh invasion, when their overlord Marcellus was ordered to rally his troops and proceed to the island of Sardinia, where the Vandals were still entrenched. Overlords of other towns were sent with troops to points along the coast that were still in the hands of the enemy, and to the adjacent islands, and the barbarians were soon routed and put to flight.

But Marcellus, alas, was destined never to return to Vicenza. His task accomplished and Sardinia restored to the Empire, he fell suddenly ill and died, leaving no son to rule in his stead and comfort his beautiful widow Tesaurea, a Russian princess who, to-

gether with her sister Panfilia, had come out of the distant East at Attila's summons and followed him westwards. Speedily embracing Christianity, the two sisters abandoned the tents of the fierce Hun, and Tesaurea bestowed her hand and affections upon Marcellus, while Panfilia married his brother Alferisius.

Alferisius now succeeded to the post of overlord, and Vicenza saw herself allied to Feltre, of which city Alferisius was seigneur in his own right.

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The Vicentines settled down once more to peaceful industrious living, and prosperity smiled upon husbandman and artisan, while the streets of the city gradually resumed something of their former aspect. News of a fresh incursion by the Alani fell upon the town like a thunderbolt in 464, and the terrified Vicentines fled to Ravenna, leaving their city to its fate. The chroniclers are somewhat vague concerning the treatment Vicenza received at the hands of the barbarians, but we may conclude that but little harm was done, for we are told that the fugitives returned to their homes at the end of a few months, when Ricimer had rid the country of the Alani.

Ricimer, maker and destroyer of four emperors, held sway until his death in 472, and this was a time of comparative well-being for the little town on the Bacchiglione, rejoicing in the prudent and equitable rule of her overlord Alferisius, and far removed from the acts of violence and treachery that were distracting other parts of the empire.

Ricimer meanwhile had prepared the way for barbaric occupation, and in 476, only four years after

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the general's death, Odoacer the Teuton descended upon unhappy Italy. Alferisius, with his sons Maximus and Sabinus and a following of Vicentines, joined the imperial army and marched against him. The Romans, however, were driven back with great loss, and Odoacer pushed forward in triumph, many towns, Vicenza among others, surrendering to him unreservedly that they might be spared the horrors of attack and sack. Alferisius fell on the field of battle, his sons succeeding him as overlords of Vicenza and Feltre.

How Odoacer made himself master of Italy at last has nothing to do with the story of our city, but, his power once firmly established, he fell to persecuting those who had opposed him, and Maximus and Sabinus were constrained to fly from Vicenza, and take refuge in Germany, where they remained for many years.

Odoacer was the first barbaric chief who settled in Italy, aiming rather at permanent establishment than at plunder and rapine. The country was certainly better governed and more prosperous during the sixteen years of his domination than it had been under the weak or infamous emperors, his immediate predecessors. The taxes were neither so heavy nor was payment of them so inexorably enforced as in former days, while much land was now cultivated by the soldiers that had previously been allowed to lie fallow by its "latifondist" proprietors.

Meanwhile Theodoric the Ostrogoth was preparing to invade the peninsula, and in 489, after a march of seven hundred miles, he crossed the Julian Alps at the head of a vast horde—men, old and young, women

and little children—and encamped near Aquileia. It has been estimated that his army consisted of some forty thousand men, but his whole following numbered not less than two hundred and fifty thousand souls. Many of the overlords who had been driven into exile by Odoacer hastened to offer their services to Theodoric, and among these were Maximus and Sabinus, who now hoped to be restored to power.

Odoacer, at the head of his troops, marched rapidly northwards, and in August a battle was fought near Aquileia which resulted in the defeat of the Teuton chief. He retreated to Verona, whither he was followed by Theodoric, who refrained from molesting Vicenza and other cities lying in his path. Nevertheless they must have suffered greatly from the demands made upon them for the maintenance of the multitude that swept along in the wake of the Ostrogoth. A battle near Verona in September resulted in Odoacer's retreat to Rome, whose gates he found closed against him. The Pope could not fail to welcome the prospect of a speedy deliverance from one who had recently evinced a desire to dictate in matters ecclesiastical, while the people were exasperated by the events of the last few months, Odoacer having been constrained to levy heavy taxes in order to provide funds for the campaign against Theodoric.

Angry and disheartened, he turned his face northwards once more, and attacked the enemy in Milan, only to be repulsed, driven back across Italy, and forced to take refuge in Ravenna, which was prepared to sustain a siege of long duration. For three years Theodoric tried in vain to capture the stronghold,

and it was not until he approached it by sea from Rimini that Odoacer, realizing that all was indeed lost, agreed to surrender. It was the good Bishop of Ravenna who finally persuaded him to yield—another example of the authority which Churchmen had already come to possess. By the terms of the treaty Odoacer's life was spared, but chroniclers give conflicting accounts of what his future position was to have been. Theodoric, however, soon settled the question by slaying the Teuton with his own hand at a banquet to which he himself had invited him. "Where is God?" cried the wretched victim with his last breath.

The death of Odoacer marks the close of the story of the ancient world. With Theodoric the Great we pass into the Middle Ages, into the history of Italy.

Maximus, Vicenza's exiled master, now hastened to claim his rights and resume his overlordship, but the city, having discovered in his absence that she could do very well without a master, that she was quite capable of governing herself, refused to admit his claim. Unable to support his demand by force of arms, he withdrew to Feltre, where he was received with rejoicing and proclaimed seigneur.

Theodoric sent one of his favourites, a certain Albinus, to inquire into the condition of Vicenza, and two new overlords were speedily appointed. Too politic to seek to compel the Vicentines' acceptance of Maximus, whom they had so recently refused to recognize, Albinus confirmed him in his occupation of Feltre, and Costanzo and Azzo were summoned to rule Vicenza in his stead. They were willingly received, and henceforth obediently served by all the inhabitants both of the city and

province. It was this Albinus who, some thirty years later, was accused of conspiring against Theodoric. His friend Boëthius warmly espoused his cause and supported him with great valour, forfeiting his own life, and falling a victim to the Gothic ruler's wrath.

Theodoric learning how many refugees still languished among the islands of the lagoons and in the marshes of the coast, put forth strenuous efforts to induce them to return to their former homes, causing their lands to be restored to them, and making many fresh grants. Meanwhile the effects of wise and firm government were fast becoming apparent on all sides. Large sums of money were supplied by the new ruler for the reconstruction of such monuments as had been demolished during the recent wars and incursions, and our Vicenza was thus enabled to restore her ruined churches and the venerable Teatro Berga.

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Upon Theodoric's death in 526 his nephew Athalaric succeeded to the Gothic throne, under the regency of his mother Amalasunta. His dissolute life was brought to a close in 534, and Theodotus, another nephew of the great Goth, was summoned to rule. The Teutons having made a descent upon the Marches and sacked Vicenza, the young Emperor hastened thither and soon succeeded in ridding the country of the savage marauders. Theodotus, however, who had found himself obliged to share the throne with Amalasunta, soon wearied of her restraining influence, and having first kept her a prisoner for some time, he at last caused her to be strangled in her bath by the relatives of three Goths whom she had sent into exile.

The tyrant then proceeded to punish all overlords who had remained faithful to the unhappy princess. Azzo and Costanzo, lords of Vicenza, had been among her most devoted and loyal servants, and Theodotus not only deprived them of their posts but drove them into exile, appointing new governors in their stead. Azzo and Costanzo now set about inciting Emperor Justinian against Theodotus, and for this purpose they repaired to Constantinople, where the monarch was so deeply impressed by their representations and confirmation of news he had already received from other sources that he at once ordered Belisarius to seize Sicily, establish his army in the island, and hold himself in readiness to invade the mainland.

Theodotus, now thoroughly alarmed, hastened to send propitiatory messages to Justinian, promising submission and future obedience, but having gained two victories over the imperial troops, one in the province of Venetia, in which many Vicentines were engaged, and another in Dalmatia, he refused to ratify a treaty his ambassadors had already signed, whereupon the Emperor immediately ordered Belisarius to invade Italy.

Azzo, meanwhile, had died in exile, and Costanzo—now for the first time called by ancient chroniclers *Count* of Vicenza—was sent into Dalmatia at the head of a large body of troops. The stubborn Goths were speedily subdued, and peace restored both here and in Friuli. A certain Achilles, Duke of Trezene in Morea, accompanied Costanzo on this expedition, and built a fortress in Dalmatia, which he called Trezene in memory of his birthplace. At the close

of the campaign Achilles is said to have followed his friend to Vicenza, where he erected another castle, took a wife, and founded the Trissino family, from which many illustrious men and women have sprung, and which still flourishes in the province.

Of the city's story during the years of strife between Ostrogoths and Greeks few details have come down to us. We know, however, that she was continually changing hands, was now held by Imperialists, now occupied by Goths, and later sacked and dominated by the Franks. Costanzo fell a victim to the Gothic king Vitiges in 536, and another of Vicenza's governors, Marzius, was killed beneath the walls of Rome during the memorable siege that lasted three hundred and seventy-four days.

While Belisarius was seeking to rid Italy of the Ostrogoths, a terrible famine afflicted the unhappy peninsula. Procopius and Muratori have left us graphic accounts of the sufferings and crimes of this period. We hear of fifty thousand peasants perishing in one province alone ; of parents sustaining life with the flesh of their own children ; of women enticing men into their dwellings only to murder and devour them ; and finally of wretched beings, too weak to stand upright, dragging themselves into the fields on hands and knees in order to feed upon the grasses and herbs.

When Vitiges was finally taken prisoner by Belisarius all the towns the Goths had held opened their doors to the triumphant Greeks. Then we read of the great general's return to Constantinople, whither he conducted the unhappy Vitiges and his queen, Matasunta,

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and where he was received with great rejoicing. Justinian now appointed governors of his own choosing to control the Gothic towns. A certain Vitale rules, or rather misrules, the March of Treviso, for these dissolute, greedy, indolent Orientals contribute much towards the utter ruin of Italy.

Hildibrald the Gothic king once more invades the province in 541, re-taking Treviso and Vicenza; and in less than a twelve-month the great Totila appears on the scene and occupies the attention of the Greeks for eleven years. With bated breath we read the epic of his mighty struggle with Belisarius, of the taking and destruction of Rome, and we dwell with pleasure on the story of his visit to holy Benedict at Monte Cassino in 542.

Seven years later the Franks cross the Alps, and, allying themselves with the Goths, rule jointly with them, and we now find a Frankish governor in Vicenza.

Soon Justinian sends the great eunuch Narces to engage the enemy, and the tawny Lombard now appears in Italy for the first time, summoned thither by the Greek to swell the ranks of his army. Totila dies from wounds received in a last bloody defeat, and Taja succeeds him. The Franks, no longer in awe of the disheartened Goths, drive them forth from many strongholds, and rule alone. Thus Vicenza passes under Frankish dominion.

In 554 the remnant of the Ostrogoths is once more forced to seek an alliance with the Franks. The lord of Vicenza, Amingo, marches against Narces and is slain, while the Gothic king Vuidius is taken prisoner and sent to Constantinople, whereupon the nation



Photo Edne. Alinari

PIAZZA DEI SIGNORI

sues for peace and makes humble submission. Thus in 555 comes the end of the Greco-Gothic war, and the end also of the Ostrogothic domination that had boasted great rulers, powerful and dauntless princesses, bold and skilful generals; a domination more beneficent, more just than those that had preceded it, but destined, alas, after nearly five-and-forty years of prosperity, to plunge Italy into the bloody war that raged for two decades.

In 557 we read of Narces' visit to Vicenza, to which city he granted many concessions. Her citizens were relieved of all taxation for a number of years, and the church of Santi Vito e Modesto (now Santi Felice e Fortunato) was restored with part of the treasure that had been wrested from the Goths.

Hardly had the cities of Italy realized the fact that peace was at last restored when a terrible pestilence swept the land. Thousands perished, whole districts were deserted by the terrified inhabitants, and the unburied bodies of the dead lay rotting on all sides. We are told that almost the entire population of Vicenza was annihilated. On the heels of the pestilence came news that the Lombards were about to descend upon the fertile plains at the foot of the Alps, and Gregory the Great bears witness to the fact that mysterious and fiery signs and glowing comets appeared repeatedly in the heavens, while ghostly armies swept across the northern horizon, filling the miserable populace with gloomy forebodings of great and immediate disaster.

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The domination of the Lombards, stretching from the time of the establishment of the Exarchate to the

advent of Charlemagne, was in reality far less disastrous to Italy than the writings of Gregory the Great would lead us to suppose. If we compare his appreciation of the Arian Lombards with that of Paul, Deacon of the church of Aquileia, we must conclude that the Pope not only misrepresented the character of the conquering nation, but also that his account of their cruelty and fierceness both in war and peace is greatly exaggerated.

The Lombard king Alboin entered Italy in 568 at the head of an army composed not only of his own people and of Saxons, but of various other Slavic and Germanic elements. Having reduced Aquileia to submission and successfully occupied the province of Friuli, he entered Venetia, seizing all the principal towns in rapid succession and, in most cases, without a struggle. Thus Vicenza passed into the hands of the Lombards with the rest, her overlord Peredeo I having fled to Pavia, together with many Vicentine nobles.

Upon the death of Alboin, slain, if not by the hand at least by order of his wife Rosamund, whom he had forced to drink from a cup fashioned from the skull of her own father, Peredeo, aided by the Exarch and by Valeriano d'Este, succeeded in expelling the Lombards from his native town. Encouraged by the victory of the Vicentines, other cities rose up against the usurping barbarians, and a league of defence was quickly formed. In 574 the allied cities waged war successfully against the Lombards occupying Friuli. But two years later Vicenza being attacked and besieged by an overwhelming force led by three of the Dukes the Lombards had created to rule the conquered cities,

she once more fell into the hands of the enemy, and ancient chroniclers give appalling but perhaps somewhat exaggerated accounts of the cruelties inflicted on the unfortunate inhabitants, and tell of the total destruction of the city. Several wealthy and powerful families emigrated to Venice at this time, amongst others the Grimani and Venieri—names familiar to all students of the history of the glorious Republic.

A Lombard duke now ruled Vicenza, while her bishop, Ornozius, was a schismatic and a disciple of the Patriarch of Aquileia, a staunch supporter of the famous Chapters of the Council of Calcedonia.

During the reign of Agilolf and the virtuous and pious Queen Theodolinda, Italy was afflicted by a series of misfortunes which caused much suffering to all classes, as well as great loss of life and property. An enormous quantity of rain fell all over the country in 589, and the consequent inundations ruined crops and flooded cities, while in the mountainous districts whole villages were carried away by the swollen streams. A pestilence followed close upon the heels of the deluge, and in 591, no rain having fallen from January to September, armies of locusts appeared in many of the provinces, devouring what little the drought had failed to destroy. The famine which ensued was followed by a second outburst of pestilence more fierce and deadly than the first.

Vicenza bore her part in the long and desperate struggle that was carried on between the Lombards and the Exarchate, but she would seem, nevertheless, to have enjoyed the benefits of good government under dukes appointed by the conquerors, and to have

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become more prosperous and flourishing than she had ever been before.

Muratori tells us that in 615 "mighty earthquakes" shook the whole of Italy, and were followed by the appearance of "that loathsome disease known as leprosy." This evil spread so rapidly that in the course of a very few years leper-hospitals had been established in almost every city; they were called *lazzaretti* to distinguish them from other hospitals, and in allusion to Lazarus the leper of the Bible.

Towards the year 630 Aldoardo degli Azi, a descendant of the native overlords of Vicenza, was created Duke of the city. His nephew succeeded him, but in 641 a Lombard ruler was once more appointed, and the rights of the Azi annulled. Vettari, the new Duke, would appear to have been a man of great ability and of many virtues, of whose courage and military prowess Paul the Deacon speaks in the highest terms. He was later made ruler of the important province of Friuli, his young son Alaric succeeding him at Vicenza.

Under good King Cunibert the town prospered and throve, and we read that in the year 700, during the reign of his successor Luitbert, the already venerable church of Santi Felice e Fortunato was restored and embellished.

In 729 we find Peredeo III, Duke of Vicenza, fighting valiantly against the Exarch, and losing his life beneath the walls of Ravenna, which would go to show that Vicenza had now become a loyal Lombard town.

The Cathedral, or perhaps an addition to an already

existing edifice, is said to have been consecrated in 735 by Bishop Pietro, to whom an ancient inscription commemorating the event gives the surname of *de' Scorpioni*.

In 752 Eutichius, the last of the Exarchs, was governing in Ravenna. The Pope, seeing how incapable was the Emperor's representative to check the advances of the Lombards, appealed for aid to King Pipin of France, who two years later crossed the Alps into Italy. The policy which the Popes have ever since pursued of summoning the foreigner to their aid, was thus initiated, and the strife between Church and State which still prevails was then begun.

King Pipin's campaign against the Lombards does not appear to have affected Vicenza to any great extent; and soon, peace having been restored, we find her entertaining the Lombard King Desiderius with great pomp and solemnity. He was lodged in the royal palace—probably, as we have said before, part of the Teatro Berga—and the usual games and pageants were celebrated in his honour. The city received many and great benefits at the hands of Desiderius, and it must have been with sorrow that she heard of his fatal defeat at Pavia in 774, when he was taken prisoner by Charlemagne and sent into exile.

Thus was the Lombard domination brought to a close, after having endured for two hundred and six years, under four-and-twenty kings.

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Duke Gaido of Vicenza was among those who offered violent resistance to Charlemagne's assumption of power in Italy. A battle took place near the river

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Livenza between the allied Vicentines and Friulians on one side and the Franks on the other. The Frankish army was routed, but victory was purchased so dearly by the allies that they were forced to accept the very generous terms which Charlemagne offered, and acknowledge him as their master. Both dukes were confirmed in their previous positions of governors of Vicenza and of Friuli, and some years later—the exact date is uncertain—the Emperor gave proof of his goodwill towards our city and her ruler by paying her a visit, during which, as we have already seen, he made rich presents and important grants to the church of [Santi Felice e Fortunato, which thus came to possess the greater part of the surrounding lands, and extensive domains throughout the province.

In the year 823 Lothair is crowned in St. Peter's, and in the list of honoured guests we read the name of the "Ambassador of Vicenza." Vicentine jurists are present in Rome at an assembly presided over by the King in person, where their advice is sought concerning a revision of the code; and in the same year, by special order of Lothair, a school is established in Vicenza, to which the students of Padua, Treviso, Feltre, Ceneda and Asolo are bidden to repair. It is believed to have been situated in what is now known as Borgo Santa Lucia.

The town prospered greatly and enjoyed many years of peace under the wise rule of overlords sprung from the rich and powerful Maltraversi family. In 840 her citizens marched against the Veronese, and a sharp struggle ensued. The story of this campaign has been quaintly told in halting verse by a poet



Photo Edme. Alinari

who flourished in Mantua in the fourteenth century. A quarrel had arisen over a question of boundary, both towns claiming a small stream that separated their territory, and we are told by the poetic historian that

Pur sempre Veronesi ricordare
Dell' inganno da' Vicentini avuto,
Non l'han potuto mai dimenticare.

From which we may conclude that the Vicentines owed their victory to a fraud, and that they were of opinion that "all things are fair in love and war."

Of the city's bishops at this period the names alone have been preserved, and in some cases not even the names, but that many were held in high consideration is clear from the fact that Eicardo of Vicenza was appointed by the Pope in 876, together with two other Bishops, to settle a quarrel between the episcopal sees of Trent and Verona. Knowledge of this circumstance has come to us through a document that was still extant when Castellini wrote his history of Vicenza.

When the Saracens appeared off the coast of Italy in 877 the Pope, greatly alarmed for the safety of Rome herself, made an urgent appeal to the cities for help. The Vicentines willingly responded, and marched southwards, led by their overlord Alferisio of the Maltraversi, and took an active part in the bloody battle near Capua, where the Saracens suffered great loss. They were soon forced to withdraw from Italy, whereupon the valiant Vicentines marched home again in triumph, and were received with great rejoicing by the populace.

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The domination of the Franks coming to an end with the death of Charles the Fat in 888, Vicenza, together with many other towns of the north, swore allegiance to Berengarius, Duke of Friuli, whose struggles to obtain and hold the throne were a source of much suffering to the cities of Italy.

The sudden onslaught of the Hungarians, who poured into the peninsula in the year 900, filled the Vicentines with dread, and although the city herself suffered at first but little at their hands, her territory was ravaged and devastated. The terrified inhabitants fled in all directions to escape contact with the barbarians, who had entrenched themselves near the Brenta, where a terrible battle took place, resulting in a victory for the Hungarians. Hereupon Treviso, Vicenza and Padua were besieged and taken, and upon these unhappy towns the fierce marauders vented their wrath. Many citizens were cruelly murdered and many edifices sacked and destroyed by fire before the savage hordes, laden with rich booty, finally withdrew from Italy.

This sudden and bloody incursion, which was destined to be so often repeated during the half-century that followed, persuaded the inhabitants of the northern provinces of the necessity of constructing strongholds and fortifications. Thus the nobles erected impregnable castles on lofty heights as well as in the very heart of the cities; watch-towers were built and monasteries and villas fortified. The world was on the eve of a long period of blood, of iron, of perfidy and corruption, and the frowning strongholds whose ruins now so greatly enhance the charm of the landscape, then

looked down upon or hid within their massive walls the evil deeds of cruel and remorseless tyrants.

The wise and just measures which Otho the Great adopted in dealing with turbulent Italy left the cities free to choose their own form of government, and to live according to the Roman, the Lombard or the Salic code. In consequence of this privilege, in the year 973 or thereabouts our city adopted a form of government that savoured greatly of the republic, and we find her styled the *Comunità di Vicenza*. Otho had created many nobles during his campaigns in Italy, and these seigneurs, each possessed of a strongly-fortified castle and with his own following of men-at-arms, soon began to wage petty war amongst themselves. The cities, being often involved in their quarrels, were obliged to defend themselves against sudden and fierce attacks. Ancient walls were therefore restored and extended, furnished with stout gates and surmounted by massive watch-towers, whence the surrounding country might be carefully scanned. Vicenza, with her wealth of water, was easily fortified. A deep moat that could be filled or emptied at will followed the line of the walls encompassing the city. Four gates, each flanked by a lofty tower, were jealously guarded by day and by night, and of these towers the remains of several may still be seen. In the neighbourhood of each gate stood a church, whither the citizens repaired not only for worship, but also for the discussion of questions concerning the well-being of the community, and where they rallied when summoned to arms by the voice of a great bell, which upon such occasions was not

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tolled in the usual manner, but made to vibrate beneath the strokes of a heavy hammer. Santo Stefano (which was already an ancient edifice) and San Faustino were of the number of these churches, but have been so frequently and so thoroughly restored and remodelled that it is now difficult to realize their great age.

The suburbs of the city were thickly populated, the peasants clustering as closely as possible about the gates, ready to rush within the walls in case of attack. Vast marshes, that at certain seasons became veritable lakes, rendered many districts in the surrounding country not only unfit for cultivation but eminently insalubrious; the hill-tops, however, were thickly wooded, and upon the lower slopes then, as to-day, the spreading vine flourished, bending low beneath its burden of luscious fruit, while the fields that lay spread between the swiftly flowing rivers were rich and fertile.

Otho III was crowned in 996. In his train came many German nobles, among others a certain Alberico, who was a special favourite with his master. Otho having endowed him with vast estates in the fertile district that lies between Bassano and Vicenza, he determined to take up his abode in this lovely Italy, whose fascination has ever proved so irresistible to pilgrims from the austere and frigid North. From this Alberico, or Albrecht, there descended through his son Ezzelino, that infamous and cruel Ezzelino III da Romano, who two centuries later became the blood-thirsty and merciless tyrant of Vicenza, Verona, Padua, Feltre, Belluno and Trent.

During the last decade of the tenth century Vicenza's peace was disturbed by two of her own sons, and she found herself torn by the quarrel that had arisen between Felice de' Marii and his nephew, representatives of a powerful and wealthy family, who had succeeded in making themselves masters of the city, driving into exile many of her leading citizens, murdering others and confiscating their treasures and estates. The two tyrants soon fell out, however, and Mario, the stronger and more determined, drove his aged uncle from Vicenza, and proclaimed his right and intention to rule alone. The overlords of Verona, Padua, Treviso, Trent and other towns declared now for one of the litigants, now for the other, and thus was the whole country torn and distracted by the cruelties and horrors of civil war. Many engagements took place in the neighbourhood of Vicenza, but Mario having at last succeeded in forming a firm alliance with the powerful Veronese, Felice withdrew from the fray discouraged, leaving his nephew in undisputed possession of Vicenza. Mario immediately formed a bodyguard for himself composed of foreign mercenaries, and these, together with a large body of men-at-arms, he established within the city. The unhappy Vicentines were forced by the tyrant to remove to the country that his soldiery and favourites might occupy their former homes. The nobles who had opposed him were all either put to death, or cast into prison and their estates confiscated, while many, after being most cruelly tortured, were flung into the moat beneath the walls, where they perished miserably. To his soldiery Mario granted the greatest licence, and crimes of all

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descriptions, that invariably went unpunished, filled the wretched populace with horror and dismay. For nearly five years had the city languished under this infamous tyrant when Jerome, Bishop of Vicenza, whom Mario had expelled from his see, succeeded in forming a coalition against the usurper, composed of the overlords of Friuli, Altino and Uderzo, which was soon joined by the Paduans. Two brothers of the Maltraversi led an attack upon Vicenza which was so fierce and so unexpected that Mario and his partisans, who had issued forth to meet the enemy, were speedily overcome and put to flight. Mario, being pursued and taken prisoner, was brought back to Vicenza in chains, and beheaded in the market-place amidst the rejoicings of the entire populace. Felice now essayed to assert his claim to supremacy in Vicenza, but her outraged citizens drove him from their gates and chose for their *President*—so the ancient historians call him—Marzio Regulo, one of those who had battled bravely for the city's deliverance.

In the year 1001 Otho III granted the county of Vicenza to Bishop Jerome. Similar grants of counties to ecclesiastics occurred frequently during the eleventh century, the intention of the Emperor being to weaken the power of the cities' overlords.

The struggle for the crown that took place on the death of Otho was the cause of much suffering throughout Italy, and that fighting took place in the neighbourhood of Vicenza is proved by the fact that the churches and monasteries situated beyond her walls were seriously damaged, and that Bishop Ridolfo's successor, Ludigerio, was obliged to expend a con-

siderable sum upon the restoration of Santi Felice e Fortunato and the convent of San Pietro, which was presently enriched by the treasures of a princess, who receiving news of the death of her consort while passing through Vicenza, cut her journey short, entered the monastery and bestowed her great fortunes upon the Benedictines.

In 1021 we find Giacomo Porto President of Vicenza. The Porto family, which even at that time was possessed of both power and wealth, is still extant, and five of the beautiful palaces we admire in the Contrada Porto were erected by members of this remarkable and illustrious house.

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The story of Vicenza during the century and a half that followed the coronation of Conrad is that of many Italian cities of the northern provinces. In 1036 we find her in proud possession of a *carroccio* such as the Milanese had recently introduced, and to the description of those cars of war, which were soon adopted by all the leading communes, ancient chroniclers devote many pages. They were simply large and heavy carts surmounted by a tall pole crowned with a gilt ball from which floated the city's standard, the body of the car being draped with scarlet cloth and profusely gilded. Eight bullocks adorned with scarlet and gold drew the *carroccio*, while men-at-arms in rich and brilliant livery paced at its side. The chief magistrate, seated upon a gorgeous throne, administered justice from the car, and when the cities went forth to battle the *carroccio*, with banners flying, was slowly and solemnly dragged to the field, where it became

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the rallying point of the troops. Around the car the battle raged most fiercely, for no victory was considered complete if the enemy succeeded in escaping with their *carroccio* uninjured.

The chief magistrate of Vicenza is now styled Consul, and in 1039 we find a member of the Trissino family occupying this post. It was at this time that a feud arose between Paduans and Vicentines which threatened to lead to bloodshed and strife, but which ended eventually as ludicrously as it had begun. It was the custom for the youth of the two cities to meet during Carnival at a certain place equally distant from either town, and join in merry-making and games of every description. Upon these occasions mock-battles often took place, in which the litigants fought with inflated bladders and other ridiculous weapons, the strange costumes and disguises worn, and the burlesque designs and witty inscriptions displayed on the different banners, contributing to render the effect grotesque in the extreme. During the Carnival of 1040 the Vicentines, who were fighting under a standard embellished with the image of an ass, suffered total defeat, and were driven from the field amidst the shouts of triumph of the victors and the derisive laughter of the spectators. The standard having fallen into the hands of the enemy, appeared on the following morning dangling from the gibbet in the market-place at Padua, whereupon the Vicentines, outraged and exasperated by this insult, and still smarting from their ignominious defeat, actually prepared to attack the city of Padua, and had not the wise magistrates of either town adopted vigorous measures to ensure peace, fierce and bloody

strife would undoubtedly have ensued. Ambassadors immediately met to discuss the terms of a treaty, and it was finally concluded that the Vicentines should send the Paduans a large quantity of *luganiga*—a species of sausage for which Vicenza was renowned—in return for which the standard should be removed from the gibbet and surrendered. Several mules bore the savoury peace-offering in panniers to Padua, and a law was enacted forbidding the two cities to celebrate future Carnivals together. This incident is worthy of note because many of the petty wars that raged so violently in the eleventh and twelfth centuries arose from causes less ludicrous perhaps but often equally futile.

Henry III's visit to Vicenza seven years later was an event of no little importance, as it was then that the right of coining money was granted her, the coins to be of the size and weight of those that issued from the mint of Verona, and to bear upon one face the image of the Emperor and upon the other the arms of Vicenza.

At the instance of his pious Empress, Henry made generous presents to San Pietro, and issued an edict placing the convent and all its possessions under the immediate protection of the crown.

A fierce feud in the Trissino family marks the year 1054, when Eugenio, occupying the post of Consul, slew his brother Enrico from motives of envy and jealousy. Enrico, a man of great virtues, was deeply beloved by the Vicentines, who rose against Eugenio and drove him and his from the city, to which he was nevermore suffered to return.

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Trouble was already brewing between the youthful but corrupt Henry IV and the saintly Hildebrand, trouble which was destined to convulse both Germany and Italy for many years to come, and which led to the famous and picturesque episode at the lofty castle of Canossa, whence the Emperor descended only to violate his recent oaths and to find himself denounced as a braggart and coward by the outraged princes of Germany. In 1081 Henry entered Italy a second time, accompanied by Clement, whom he was determined to place upon the throne of Peter. Conscious of the danger and difficulty of this undertaking, he was naturally anxious to acquire as many partisans as possible, and was lavish with his gifts and grants, especially to the overlords and bishops of the north.

Azolino (or Ycelo), Bishop of Vicenza, together with the Bishops of Milan, Treviso, Bologna, Ravenna and other cities, had been included in the sentence of excommunication under which Henry had languished. The Emperor, more than ever in need of support, now lavished rich favours upon him, creating him Duke, Marquis and Count, and endowing him with no less than eighteen castles and domains. It was little to be wondered at that the delighted prelate should pledge the city to the Ghibelline faction, and as Dukes of Vicenza he and his successors ruled supreme for many years.

The city could not well escape the consequences of the contentions between Emperor and Pope, and her citizens bore their part in the battles that were constantly occurring between towns of the Ghibelline faction and those vowed to the cause of Urban II, who had succeeded to the papal throne imbued with all



Photo Ed^{ne}. Alinari

THE LOGGIA BERNARDO—NOW THE TOWN HALL



the fervour and desire for reform that had inspired the actions of Gregory. In Urban, Peter the Hermit found an ardent disciple, and the Christian world was roused to action by the call to arms that rang out on the plain outside the gates of Piacenza, in 1095, when the vicerent of Christ told the assembled multitude of the advance of the Turk and of the insult and outrage to which the holy places of Palestine were being subjected. Vicenza, answering the call with all the fervour of that mystic age, sent her contingent of warriors to the far East, led by the sons of her noblest families.

Meanwhile her Bishops were becoming tyrants, and her Consuls were gradually being deprived of all authority. A party was formed of which Count Uberto Maltraverso was the leader, to wrest the supreme power from Bishop Torengo, and to reinstate the Consuls of earlier and happier days. Maltraverso led his followers to an attack upon Brendola, one of the strongest castles possessed by Torengo, which was speedily brought to surrender. The prelate, however, hastened to assemble his partisans, foremost among whom was the head of the Vivarese family, and a bloody contest took place beneath the walls of Vicenza, which resulted in a victory for Torengo, and cost many of Maltraverso's companions their lives. The Emperor Henry V essayed, with apparent success, to pacify the contending parties, and while Torengo was reinstated as Duke and chief-magistrate of Vicenza, her outlawed citizens were once more admitted within her walls. But the feud was destined to break out afresh and with renewed fury,

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and this in 1111, when Henry had already quitted Italy. Torengo, unable to resist the pressure that was now brought to bear upon him, was driven from the city. He fled to Brendola, and strongly fortifying both that castle and the Rocca of Alta Villa, resisted his opponents for some time, but was finally brought to accept the terms offered by the Vicentines. Having foresworn all pretensions to temporal power, the episcopal dignity was restored to him, while Uberto Maltraverso was proclaimed Consul by the triumphant citizens.

The frequent pestilences that afflicted Italy during these centuries of suffering and unrest necessitated the foundation of numerous hospitals, and we have knowledge of no less than seven of these pious institutions in Vicenza and her immediate neighbourhood, where not only were the sick lodged and cared for, but pilgrims, crusaders and travellers housed and fed.

The question of boundary between Padua and Vicenza was ever a source of dispute, and engagements frequently took place, now here, now there along the line, keeping the citizens of either commune in a state of continuous and feverish excitement. It was during one of these periods of ferment that Henry V visited the town on his return from Rome, where, in the absence of the fugitive Pope, the Archbishop of Prague had placed the imperial crown upon his head. Henry was warmly welcomed both by the citizens and Bishop of Vicenza, and succeeded in reconciling the hostile cities, at least for the time being. Upon this occasion the ancient privileges both of commune and bishop were confirmed, the Emperor

being eager to conciliate both parties, but the bishops, still mindful of the days when their aggressions had cost them dear, refrained from encroaching upon the rights of the commune.

It would be tedious indeed were we to enumerate the many inter-communal wars in which Vicenza participated during the next fifty years; and which were of such frequent occurrence that it is difficult to understand how the population of the cities escaped utter destruction. Bologna was so often torn by these contentions that the students—who at that time were masters of the universities—were frequently constrained to remove the famous seat of learning to some neighbouring town until such a time as peace should be restored. Thus Vicenza once had the honour of offering hospitality to the University of Bologna for the space of seven years.

The discord and rivalry between Pope and Emperor still continued, and from the necessity, on either side, of securing partisans, there arose the feudal institutions which so long oppressed Europe. The Bishop of Vicenza was one of the first to follow the example of Pope and Emperor and establish episcopal fiefs throughout his diocese. These fiefs were held by Vicentines of noble family, who were bound by oaths of a most solemn nature to support the Bishop and his cause at all times and in all places. The chief of these feudal vassals was called the *Avvocato del Vescovo*, and was possessed of great authority over all the others. He attended upon the Bishop on all solemn occasions, and no episcopal grant or decree was legal unless countersigned by the *Avvocato*. This important office

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was long held by members of the Vivaro family, while the Conti still represented the commune and occupied the post of Consul.

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Vicenza was one of the first cities to declare for Frederick Barbarossa when he entered Italy in 1154. Four years later we find his representative, Otho of Wittelsbach, Count Palatine, receiving the oaths of allegiance of Bishop and Consuls alike. In consequence of this allegiance Vicenza was compelled to take part in the long and cruel sieges of Brescia and Milan. At the famous Diet of Roncaglia, whither Barbarossa had summoned the princes of Italy, both secular and ecclesiastical, as well as the consuls of all the communes, we find Vicenza represented both by her ecclesiastical and civic authorities. The stringent and arbitrary nature of the laws enacted at this Diet was destined ere long to lead those communes that had so recently sworn fealty to his cause to rebellion against the Emperor. The most odious of these decrees deprived the free cities of the right of choosing their own Consuls and other magistrates, who henceforth were to be appointed by the Emperor himself, and to be styled Imperial Commissaries or Vicars. Heavy fines would be exacted from any city seeking to disobey this injunction.

In violation of his promise to spare Milan and her territory, Barbarossa attacked Crema, which, after suffering much at the hands of the imperial troops, was burnt to the ground by express order of the Emperor. Hereupon Milan herself was once more besieged and subjected to a sack that lasted several

days, and her wretched citizens driven forth and forced to seek the hospitality of neighbouring towns. Brescia and Piacenza were also severely punished for the resistance they had offered, and the cities of the Marches, including Vicenza, were coerced into taking up arms against the Venetian Republic, whose Doge had sent out troops in defence of Milan.

Hardly had Barbarossa crossed the Alps and retired into Germany, when the Venetians began to incite the communes of the north to rebellion. The cruel and tyrannical conduct of the Count Palatine and of other imperial governors, and the loss, through Barbarossa, of so many ancient privileges, had predisposed the down-trodden people to regard with favour a scheme which the Venetians now proposed for the overthrow of imperial tyranny. In consequence of these circumstances the cities of Treviso, Verona, Padua and Vicenza drove out the governors who had been set over them, and re-establishing the old order of things, appointed consuls and magistrates of their own choosing. A treaty of defence was then drawn up, and signed by the representatives of the four cities, in the year 1164, this being the nucleus of the glorious Lombard League, destined to withstand and vanquish at last the tyranny of Frederick, and, by the peace concluded at Venice in 1183, to ensure to the communes of Italy that freedom of which he had sought to despoil them.

This peace, however, failed to extinguish the ardour of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, whose rivalries continued to distract the communes, arming brother against brother, and causing much strife and bloodshed at

all times, but especially at the annual election of the consuls. *Giovanni Cacciafronte*, the Guelph Bishop of Vicenza, was murdered in the neighbourhood of the Cathedral in the year 1184 by emissaries of several lords of the Ghibelline faction. His vassals and partisans hastened to avenge the death of this holy man, and one of those petty wars, so common at this period, blazed forth with quickly-spent violence.

The Lombard League that had united the communes against Barbarossa was renewed against his son, for a period of five-and-twenty years. But this did not mean peace for Italy, for never a year and hardly a month passed that did not witness some passage of arms, did not see some castle attacked and stormed, some seigneur and his followers murdered or imprisoned. Violence and superstition went hand in hand, and churches were built or endowed with moneys wrested by force from conquered enemies, or extorted by torture from rich Jews; while the prosperous merchants of Genoa and Venice, who were obliged to traverse wild and mountainous districts, were often waylaid and despoiled of goods and treasure, and might deem themselves fortunate if allowed to resume their journey, half-naked but uninjured.

The lords of Vicenza, Padua and Treviso, when pursuing their unhappy victims, often trespassed upon each other's territory, whereupon the injured commune would fly to arms and punish the offending lord by burning his castles, devastating his estates and torturing his peasants.

At a certain point the Bacchiglione divides, one branch flowing towards Padua, and at that time



Photo Edue. Alinari

constituting the city's sole water-supply. Upon the slightest provocation the Vicentines would hasten to cut off this supply by turning the stream from its natural course, and many and fierce were the struggles which resulted. Within the cities families were pitted against each other, and street-fights and conflagrations were every-day occurrences. Twice within a period of fifty years was Vicenza partially destroyed in consequence of these inter-family feuds.

It was during this era of violence that the *flagellanti* appeared upon the scene, that St. Francis and St. Dominic founded their orders, and that holy friars wandered from place to place preaching the gospel of peace and brotherly love. One of these pious men, *Giovanni da Vicenza*, preached with such ardour and success in Bologna and Verona, where four hundred thousand gathered to listen to his words, that the Paduans, having besought him to visit their city, went forth to meet him with the *carroccio* and brought him within the walls like a conqueror. In Vicenza he laboured to reform the statutes and the administration of justice, and for some time his native town enjoyed that welcome peace with which his great intellect and sense of equity had endowed her. The Ghibellines, however, soon accused him of treason and of acting in obedience to orders from Rome, and finally succeeded in driving him from the city, which soon fell into the bloodstained hands of *Ezzelino da Romano*.

First, however, Vicenza, together with many other Lombard towns, having declared for the Pope and the cause of the Guelphs, suffered siege and sack at the hands of the Emperor and his ally Ezzelino in

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1236. A great conflagration took place, in which the communal palace and the neighbouring church of St. Vincent were destroyed, and so intense was the heat that the bells of the lofty tower opposite fell to the ground in a state of semi-liquefaction. Many Vicentines, both men and women, were put to death by the cruel Germans and Saracens who formed the bulk of the imperial forces, and the awful slaughter would have continued had not Ezzelino interfered—not from any virtuous motive, but with a desire to propitiate the city, which he proposed to seize for himself. A German captain who refused to obey the tyrant's orders, he slew with his own hand, and the town was speedily relieved of the presence of the triumphant enemy. Ezzelino was appointed Imperial Commissary of Vicenza, and tradition has it that not only did the Emperor approve of, but actually recommend, the reign of terror his governor instituted.

Of medium stature, fair of skin, with hair that was "between the white and the red"—so an ancient chronicler has it—and eyes before which the boldest must quail, Ezzelino was undoubtedly a madman of the most dangerous type. His genius as a general and his power over the minds of men are undeniable, but his cunning and treachery, his sudden outbursts of violent and uncontrollable rage, his thirst for blood and his delight at sight of bodily pain, all point to mental aberration and degeneracy. In those early days, however, as well, indeed, as at a more recent period, such symptoms denoted simply demoniac possession. Woman had no fascination for him, and he possessed none of the vices of the libertine ;

but he was superstitious to an absurd degree, and several soothsayers and necromancers were ever in his train. One of these, Paul the Saracen, he had imported from the far East. He was easily troubled or elated by dreams, and would often summon his soothsayers at dead of night, that they might reassure him concerning some vision that had disturbed his slumbers. A raven having one day perched upon his standard, was carried ever afterwards in his train, and great was the tyrant's preoccupation lest this bird, to which he attributed occult and far-reaching powers, should die or escape.

In 1237 Ezzelino succeeded in making himself master of Padua, the city destined to suffer most at his hands, and Treviso also soon owned him her overlord. Schio, Sant' Orso and many other small towns and well-fortified castles succumbed to him, while in 1249 we find Feltre and Belluno added to the list of his conquests. In that year he married his third wife, Beatrice, the lovely daughter of Buontraverso dei Maltraversi, who was soon thrown into prison by his son-in-law, and suffered to perish from starvation.

Upon the death of the Emperor Frederick, his son Conrad entered Italy to receive the homage of his subjects. Ezzelino hastened to meet him, remained for some time in his train, and accompanied him to Vicenza, where he saw to it that the monarch was received with every mark of loyalty and rejoicing. No sooner, however, was Conrad embarked for Sicily than Ezzelino, well aware of the manifold difficulties with which the youthful ruler's path was beset, boldly proclaimed himself sole and independent master of

all he had heretofore held in the Emperor's name, crushing opposition and silencing remonstrance by the sword and rack, and surpassing even Nero himself in cruelty and thirst for blood. We hear of holy friars tortured to death or left to languish in loathsome prisons ; of two hundred citizens beheaded, drawn in quarters or horribly mutilated in Padua in less than two years ; of over two thousand Paduans put to death in Verona because their city had opened its gates to the tyrant's enemies ; of nobles, both in Vicenza and Verona, dragged for miles at a horse's tail and then burnt in the great square ; of three brothers brutally done to death for having failed to prevent a marriage which Ezzelino had forbidden ; of a Paduan nobleman strangled and then beheaded for having hesitated to repudiate his innocent and virtuous wife, daughter of a house which the tyrant was determined to extirpate ; of women and children mutilated and tortured with every refinement of cruelty ; and, finally, of the thousands that perished in the nauseous dungeons of Verona, Padua, Vicenza and Cittadella, where men, women and children were so closely huddled together that many died from want of air, their bodies being left where they had fallen until the next *quarterly* cleaning of the prison.

Every year the Pope renewed the sentence of excommunication he had long ago pronounced against Ezzelino, and many were the attempts upon his life. But so wary was he and so carefully guarded that these invariably failed. A German in the garb of a pilgrim once succeeded in reaching his side during a banquet, but before he could draw the dagger he

held concealed beneath the folds of his ample cloak he was seized and led away to immediate execution.

So horrible were the tortures to which his victims were subjected that one strong man, fearing that suffering might lead him to betray his friends, bit out his tongue and spat it in the tyrant's face before being placed upon the rack.

One of the lords of Monticoli, accused of treason by Ezzelino, sprang upon him unarmed, and so lacerated his face with teeth and nails that he bore the marks of his victim's rage to the day of his death. Had his servants not heard their master's cries Monticoli would have succeeded in ridding the world of a monster of iniquity.

At last, in 1256, Pope Alexander IV preached a crusade against the blood-stained tyrant, signing with the cross all who came forward to join the holy league. The Archbishop of Ravenna was appointed papal legate and given command of the troops, and around his standard there speedily rallied the forces of the Marchese d'Este, of the Venetian Republic, and all the outlaws of the cities that bore Ezzelino's yoke.

For three years he withstood the enemy, fighting now here, now there, burning castles, slaying, torturing, betraying. His brother Alberico, as overlord of Treviso, had also been guilty of much cruelty, but now the day of reckoning had come for both. Ezzelino, suffering horribly from an injured foot, was taken prisoner on the sixteenth of September, 1259, and confined in the castle of Soncino, where he died ten days later, furiously rending the bandages from his festering wounds, while dumb rage tore at his cruel heart.

On the death of his brother, Alberico, with his family and a small band of followers, fled from Treviso, and took refuge in the stronghold of San Zeno; but on the day preceding his departure he perpetrated his last act of cruelty by causing to be beheaded no less than five-and-twenty nobles, whose wives and daughters were stripped naked and driven forth from the city in utter destitution. Venetians, Paduans, Trevisans and Vicentines hastened to surround the fortress of San Zeno, and Alberico was soon brought to plead humbly for his miserable life. But too great had been the crimes of his race for pity to soften the hearts of the victors. His six sons were beheaded and his wife and two daughters burnt before his eyes before the headsman's sword put an end to his misery.

Ezzelino having died childless, the abhorred race of the da Romano was thus extirpated, and endless was the rejoicing in the cities that had so long groaned and languished beneath its inhuman domination.

Turning from these repulsive figures, we find ourselves face to face with the holy Bartolommeo Brehanze, Bishop of Vicenza, whose wise precepts and clever statesmanship contributed so largely towards calming the violent dissensions amongst the citizens of Vicenza, and restoring the commune to a state of peace and order, and whose memory still pervades the lovely church of Santa Corona.

Bartolommeo, however, despite his great and truly Christian virtues, did not hesitate to persecute most cruelly the Arians and other heretics, who had become both numerous and powerful, and so successful were the measures he adopted against them that within

a few months the city was purged of heresy and the Roman Church reigned supreme.

Proclaimed by the citizens overlord of Vicenza on the death of Ezzelino, the Bishop chose a *Podestà* whom he himself could easily control, and for some time all went well. Old roads were mended and new ones built; the fortifications of towns and castles were restored and strengthened; taxation was reduced and regulated; churches and monasteries were built and endowed. But Padua, who had long aspired to the possession of Vicenza, seized every opportunity of stirring up strife, and not only did she favour and secretly patronize Vicentine outlaws of the Ghibelline faction, but made strenuous and successful efforts to disturb the peace that reigned between Vicenza and Verona. Civil war burst forth once more with greater violence than ever, and for fifty years the history of the Lombard Communes is a maze of inconclusive skirmishes varied by bloody battles, of marauding expeditions and blazing castles, of besieged towns and devastated territories.

At this time the guilds or *Arti* were beginning to become powerful. Almost every trade was organized into a corporate body, each with its own standard, around which in times of war the artisans gathered with shouts of *Vivano l' Arti e il Popolo!* Even the rag-pickers had their own guild and a voice in public matters, while the butchers formed perhaps the most powerful body of all. At certain periods the supremacy of these guilds was such that public magistrates were chosen from their ranks alone, and thus we find the sons of noble houses inscribed upon their lists. These

guilds contributed greatly towards the defence of Vicenza when Mastino della Scala, already seigneur of Verona and returning from a victorious expedition against Treviso, attempted to subjugate the city in 1266. Thanks to the valour of her citizens, he was repulsed speedily and with loss.

The Paduans having arrogated to themselves the right of appointing the *Podestà* of Vicenza, much strife and discord distracted the city at the times of the elections, which now took place twice a year. Upon the death of Bartolommeo an attempt was made to appoint a Paduan abbot to the vacant see. This proved unsuccessful, but Vicenza was punished for her resistance by the cruelties of Sinesio de Bernardi of Padua, who became *Podestà* in 1272 and used his brief period of authority to persecute and torture, many of the most respected citizens and prominent nobles being torn upon the rack or put to death. At the end of his term of office the Vicentine judges condemned this monster to the payment of a heavy fine, but the sentence against the favourite was speedily quashed by the courts of Padua.

Meanwhile Mastino della Scala had been done to death in the streets of Verona, and both Padua and Vicenza had suffered his murderers to take refuge within their walls, which had aroused great indignation in the breasts of the Veronese and of Alberto, Mastino's brother and successor.

The Vicentine outlaws and, it is believed, the Bishop himself lending their support to the enterprise, the Veronese marched upon Vicenza, but the citizens, summoned to arms by the voice of the tocsin, offered

such determined resistance that the Scaliger was forced to retreat to Verona. Through their *Podestà*, the Paduans punished severely all those whom they suspected of having taken part in the conspiracy, and Bishop Bernardo fled the city, thus confirming many in the belief that he had favoured the Veronese.

A truce was signed by the belligerents in 1280, and for ten years comparative goodwill reigned between the three cities, Padua, however, still continuing to tyrannize over Vicenza. No sooner was peace thus restored than the Vicentines set about building churches and monasteries. San Lorenzo was begun, to be finished six-and-thirty years later. The stone bridge called *Ponte di Pusterla* was built, in the place of a wooden structure of earlier date. Hospitals were enlarged and restored, and several so-called "double monasteries" were authorized and endowed. In these double monasteries monks and nuns of the same order dwelt together, and that they were not always separated as completely as they should have been is clearly proved by an episcopal decree of the year 1307, ordering that a wall be erected between the cells of the monks and those of the nuns in the convent connected with the hospital of San Biagio.

A rupture occurred in 1290 between Vicentines and Paduans, the latter having most barbarously tortured and eventually put to death Count Beroardo di Guidone, whom they suspected of plotting against their domination in Vicenza. The city's Paduan garrison was attacked by the relatives and friends of Beroardo, to whom the outlaws, ever ready to attempt the overthrow of the party in power, lent willing and efficacious

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support. As it was the festival of Santi Felice e Fortunato, the entire population had thronged to the churches, and the enemy was well within the gates, had even seized the Piazza now called *dei Signori*, before the tocsin roused the Vicentines from their devotions. A lively passage of arms ensued, but Giordano, leader of the attack, and brother-in-law of the murdered Beroardo—his wife bore the quaint name of *Benzina*—was finally captured, together with many of his partisans. They were all promptly executed in the Piazza, Giordano receiving burial within the cloisters of San Michele, while the bodies of the others were suspended from gibbets outside the walls, where they long remained, a ghastly and solemn warning to those who still cherished the hope of casting off the Paduan yoke.

A holy and eloquent monk, Frate Romano Vicentino, and a licentious and dissolute bishop, Andrea de Mozzi, cross the pages of Vicenza's story at this time. The ardent purity of the one, preaching from her pulpits to great assemblies, stands forth in strong contrast to the life of shame and profligacy of the other, of whom Dante, to whom he was well known, having once been bishop of Florence, says—

. . . e vedervi
Se avessi avuto di tal tigna brama,
Colui potei, che dal servo de' servi
Fu trasmutato d' Arno in Bacchiglione,
Ove lasciò li mal protesi nervi.¹

¹ . . . and thou hadst seen there,
If thou hadst had a hankering for such scurf,
That one, who by the Servant of the Servants,
From Arno was transferred to Bacchigliose,
Where he has left his sin-excited nerves.
(*Inferno*, XV. Longfellow's translation.)



Andrea de Mozzi's career at Vicenza was fortunately a short one, for he soon succumbed to the gout, to which malady the expression "li mal protesi nervi" is an allusion.

In 1297 Alberto della Scala made a fresh but once more unsuccessful attempt to annex Vicenza to his already vast possessions. The commune continued under Paduan rule until the advent of Henry VII in 1308, when Padua purchased of him, for sixty thousand gold florins to be paid immediately, plus fifteen thousand to be paid annually, the perpetual right of dominion over Vicenza. This outrage against their liberty was too great to be borne, and the Vicentines within and without the walls determined, in their turn, to appeal to the Emperor, promising submission and loyalty to his cause. A certain Vicentine, Singhelfredo, Count of Ganzera, who had been banished by the Paduans and had long lived at the court of Cyprus, returned to Verona in disguise, and placed himself at the head of a conspiracy against Padua. He was deputed to repair to the court of Henry, who was then resting at Cremona, and offer his native town to the monarch. Henry—who had probably already grasped the sixty thousand gold florins promised him by Padua, and now saw a means of further gain—received him graciously, and ordered one of his most skilful captains, with three hundred horse, to accompany Singhelfredo whither he should lead, and support him against any one whom he might point out. They repaired to Mantua without delay, where another body of troops came to swell their numbers, and thence proceeded to Verona, where they were received

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by Cangrande della Scala with open arms, as he was overjoyed at the double prospect of checking the arrogant pretensions of the Paduans, and of one day bringing the rebellious Vicentines under his own domination as Imperial Rector, a post to which he already aspired.

Vicenza was attacked on Easter Day, and the struggle that ensued was short, but desperate. Cangrande himself commanded the allied troops, and the Paduan garrison was practically annihilated. A terrible storm had raged during the preceding night, and the streams, which were greatly swollen, had in many places overflowed their banks and carried away bridges. Thus retreat was rendered doubly difficult, and many perished while attempting to swim the Bacchiglione and reach the open country beyond.

The rejoicing at this decisive victory reached the point of delirium. Triumphal arches were erected in honour of Singhelfredo and of Cane, who were proclaimed the "Padri della Patria," and celebrated by the local bards in spontaneous outbursts of enthusiastic if halting verse, the city meanwhile giving herself up to feasting and thanksgiving for many days.

Great was the wrath of Padua at her inglorious defeat, and great also was the injury she proceeded to inflict upon the Vicentine territory. The victors, however, were not slow to retaliate, and the territories of both cities were completely laid waste. But at last the fury of the litigants spent itself, and Vicenza sent a gift of fifty thousand ducats to the Emperor, as a mark of her gratitude and devotion. Within a year, nevertheless, she had rebelled against the Imperial Rector,

and was beginning to look towards the Scaligers as her future masters and protectors.

Upon the death of Alboino, Cangrande became head of his house, and immediately sent ambassadors to the Emperor at Genoa for the purpose of obtaining the rectorships of Verona and Vicenza. The ambassadors, well equipped with the wherewithal to touch the heart of the grasping monarch, set forth hopefully, and soon returned triumphant with the much-coveted writ of instalment. Cangrande soon betook himself to Vicenza to receive the homage of his new subjects. He was accompanied by a large body of troops and by the chief personages of his court, and was received with every mark of rejoicing by the population, who issued forth to meet him outside the gates. Amidst the joyous clanging of bells and loud shouts of *Viva il Signor nostro! Viva il Signor Cane!* he was escorted to the Piazza, where the keys of the city and her standard were placed in his eager hands. Cangrande remained two months in Vicenza dispensing favours and hospitality with his accustomed splendour and generosity. Of the magnificence of the Scaligers' court, even in these early days, many particulars have come down to us, and Cangrande's successor, Mastino II, when he had completed the conquest of the many cities and of the vast territory that formed his domain, could boast himself richer than the King of France himself. Padua, still hopeful of regaining Vicenza, attacked the Vicentines in the open country near the city in 1313, and forced them to a hasty and disorderly retreat; but Cane, glad of the opportunity of worrying Padua, promptly entered her territory, and occupied many

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domains and castles, giving the country over to his eager troops to plunder and sack at will. Having imparted a severe lesson to the enemy, he withdrew to Vicenza, bringing with him a large number of prisoners and much valuable booty.

A second advance of the Paduans resulted in the bloody battle of Longara, where four hundred—a large number for those days—perished, and where the Vicentines, led by Cane himself and amidst shouts of *Viva la Scala!* triumphed gloriously. But nothing could conquer the animosity and rivalry of the two cities, and for many years to come Cangrande was continually being summoned to protect Vicenza and her territory.

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During this period numerous Ghibelline outlaws from other parts of Italy took up their residence in the domains of the Scaligers, a fact which would account for the foreign—especially the Florentine—origin of many of Vicenza's most prominent families.

Of Dante's sojourn at Cangrande's court, where he was long a welcome and an honoured guest, the story belongs by right to Verona, but there is a tradition that the poet once accompanied his host to Vicenza, although no particulars concerning this visit have been placed on record by historians.

Uguccione dalla Faggiuola, driven from his place of power in Pisa, sought the hospitality of the Veronese court, and was speedily appointed *Podestà* of Vicenza. We hear of him leading an unsuccessful attack upon Treviso shortly before his death, which took place in Vicenza in 1319. Cangrande, who was deeply afflicted

by the loss of his friend and valiant captain, caused his body to be removed to Verona, where it was interred with great pomp and the highest honours.

Ferretto dei Ferretti also flourished at this time. In speaking of him Castellini says : “ Besides the general story of the whole of Italy, Ferretto related most accurately all the important events that took place in his native country from the advent of the Emperor Henry VII down to the year 1328, which was the last of the wars of Cangrande della Scala. He, moreover, being a most excellent poet, composed many praiseworthy works in verse. Amongst others we find one upon the death of Dante, a Florentine poet, one concerning the affairs of Cangrande, and another upon the death of Benvenuto Campesano, besides many letters, inscriptions and epigrams which he sent to Alberto Mussato, a poet of Padua, and to other scholarly geniuses.”

Ferretti was perhaps the first Italian scholar who studied the *Divine Comedy*, and treated of it in his writings, and this at a time when the great poet's ashes were in danger of being scattered to the winds by the hand of the public executioner—when his own children were ignorant of the poem's far-reaching significance, and the world at large looked upon it as a spiteful ill-natured work, the creation of a vindictive imagination. Ferretti grasped the poet's meaning, realized the all-embracing and profound wisdom of his mighty work, and boldly proclaimed him *eruditissimo uomo*. Ferretti himself was influenced by Dante to a very perceptible degree, and this fact is not only displayed in his style, but also in the cruel and cutting

sarcasm, the bitter judgments and sweeping condemnations, in which he so freely indulges.

As a poet Muratori places Ferretti before Mussato, and proclaims him "the precursor of Petrarch," but Muratori has at all times a weakness for the superlative, and we may also allow for partiality when Castellini pronounces him "a historian of most perfect precision and rectitude." Being, above all things a poet, he could not well escape the sway of his vivid imagination, and as the personages he described and the times he dealt with teemed with romance and adventure, it is little to be wondered at if the artist sometimes led the historian astray. He was a frequent and ever-welcome guest at Cangrande's hospitable and sumptuous court, whither Giotto, whose friend he became, had already been summoned to beautify with his magic brush the walls of the Scaligers' numerous and splendid palaces.

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The long struggle for supremacy in Padua was brought to a close in 1327, when the keys of the city were sent to Cane, who happened to be in Vicenza at the time. Presently Treviso was taken and incorporated, and thus ended the wars of the great leader, who, alas, was not destined to enjoy the fruits of his glorious and well-earned victories, death closing his strenuous and triumphant career in the city he had so recently conquered, on July 22, 1329.

Like Ezzelino, Cangrande died childless, and his nephews, Alberto and Mastino, succeeded to his estates and lofty position. Mastino, who became overlord of Verona, was a bold and restless spirit, but ill qualified to walk in the footsteps of his mighty uncle, none of



whose talents and qualities, save courage alone, would appear to have descended upon him. In 1332, however, he made himself master of Brescia, and three years later Parma and Lucca were brought to acknowledge him as their overlord ; but in his dealings with the Venetians he had been rash and indiscreet, and soon a quarrel arose concerning the production and sale of salt, a branch of commerce which the great Republic was determined to monopolize. Florence was also chafing because Mastino had sent his troops to occupy Lucca, and a secret league was speedily formed against him between the two powerful peoples. Padua once more eluded the grasp of the della Scala, and the allied forces, entering the territory of Verona, took possession of Montecchio Maggiore, threatened Vicenza herself and seized Costoza, where the wonderful cave (*Covolo*) was raided and found to contain many treasures which the terrified inhabitants of neighbouring villas and castles had hidden there. Vicenza having been isolated by the occupation of all the roads leading thence to Verona and Padua, the city was surrounded and besieged, her very bishop betraying her and going over to the enemy. The siege was long and bitter, and Mastino finding himself unable to relieve Vicenza—the key to Verona herself—was forced to accept most humiliating and disastrous terms, and set his seal to a treaty which, although it restored his brother Alberto to liberty and left Vicenza in possession of the Scaligers, deprived them of all else save Verona, Parma and Lucca, which two latter towns were soon wrested from them. By the terms of the treaty all outlaws and traitors who had borne arms for the

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allies, were restored to their former positions and to the possession of their estates, and absolved from taxation and the payment of their debts for a period of ten years. The star of the della Scala was fast setting.

Mastino, who had become a prey to melancholy and was subject to frequent fits of blind rage against the cruel destiny that had cast him down from his lofty position, in one of these periods of madness attacked and murdered his relative, the famous Bishop Bartolommeo della Scala, for which he was excommunicated by Benedict XI, remaining under the ban for many months. The unhappy Mastino died in 1351, no human being—not even his devoted and faithful wife, so runs the legend—ever having beheld his countenance after the bloody crime by which he had disgraced himself and his house.

Cangrande II, son of Mastino, succeeded him, his reign lasting only eight years, at the end of which he was murdered by his brother, Can Signorio. Cangrande II was no favourite with his subjects, whom he burdened with heavy and cruel taxation. In Vicenza we hear of honours conferred by him upon the heads of the Thiene and Trissino families, who had supported him loyally during the conspiracy that had been set afoot by his natural brother Fregnano. His natural sister Veronesia, he gave in marriage to Giacomo Trissino, to whom she brought a rich dower.

Can Signorio the fratricide easily obtained pardon for the deed of blood which had rid the country of a grasping tyrant, and continued to rule Verona wisely and justly, with his brother Alboino, a virtuous prince, greatly beloved by all his subjects. Can Signorio, how-

ever, fearing that Alboino's popularity might lead the people to proclaim him sole ruler, soon found a pretext for casting him into prison, where he languished for many years. Shortly before his death in 1375, Can Signorio caused his brother to be strangled, for fear that he might assert his claims upon Verona and Vicenza to the detriment of the tyrant's two natural sons. He is said to have declared that he should be quite happy amidst the torments of hell itself if only he might be sure that his sons had succeeded him.

This last great lord of the Scala line did much towards the improvement of Vicenza's fortifications. Under him her walls were strengthened and extended, and several towers and bridges were built. It was during his reign that Ugucione Thiene of Vicenza, a man of great learning and discretion, was sent by the Pope upon a mission to the Austrian court, and died at Vienna before the arrival of the messenger who had been dispatched from Rome with the cardinal's hat which the pontiff had seen fit to confer upon him in recognition of the skill and equity with which he had conducted the negotiations. Ugucione was buried in Vienna with every mark of honour and much splendour, his coffin being borne by twelve bishops, and on the day of his obsequies a solemn Requiem was sung both in Rome and Vicenza.

Upon the death of Can Signorio, Regina della Scala, his sister, and wife of Bernabò Visconti, essayed to assert her rights to succession in opposition to the claims advanced by her nephews Bartolommeo and Antonio, and thus was kindled a feud that raged long and fiercely between the Scaligers and Visconti. Hos-

100 VICENZA, THE HOME OF "THE SAINT"

tilities began at once, and Vicenza as well as Verona was continually harassed by the engagements of the belligerents, often bearing her share in attack and skirmish.

A peace was concluded between Milan and Verona in 1379, and in honour of the event a great celebration took place in Vicenza, lasting several days. The first day was given up to tilting, wrestling, military exercises, music and merry-making in the Piazza. On the second day the men-at-arms and all the guilds, with a brave show of banners and gay colours, marched or rather danced through the principal thoroughfares, while the youths of the city devoted themselves to the game of the *Quintana*, to the great amusement of the assembled throng. This *Quintana*—the life-sized wooden figure of a soldier—had been set up for the occasion in the Piazza, and bore in one hand a heavy club, and in the other a shield. The game consisted in dealing the puppet, which was cleverly balanced upon a swivel, a blow upon the breast, but in such a manner as to avoid setting it in motion. An awkward blow caused the figure to revolve, and the unlucky player was sure to receive either a smart rap from the club or a knock from the shield that could not fail to send him sprawling. Pentecost fell while the festivities were still in progress, and a symbolic drama was enacted in the Piazza del Vescovado. A lofty platform was erected at the expense of the clergy of Vicenza, and upon this stage four matrons representing the four Marys were seated, while around them stood clustered the twelve Apostles. At the back of the stage was a group of citizens representing the Romans and Jews.

One by one the Apostles rose, saluted the Virgin Mary, and chanted passages from the prophecies dealing with the descent of the Holy Ghost. Suddenly an explosion was heard upon the tower that at that time surmounted the Bishop's palace, and, by means of a cord, a wooden dove that had previously been set alight was made to descend, and hover above the platform. Hereupon the Apostles fell on their knees, praying that the Almighty might fulfil the prophecies and cause the Holy Spirit to descend upon them. The prayers and hymns of the disciples and pious women were continually interrupted by the mocking laugh and incredulous comments of a prince of Judea, who formed one of the group at the back. A second outburst of flames, and a deafening noise caused all to lift their eyes to the tower once more, whence were seen to descend three flaming doves, which hovered for some minutes above that part of the stage occupied by the disciples. Hereupon all began to chant the prophecies in different tongues, and the prince of Judea fell upon his face, declaring himself confounded and convinced. We are told that a French prelate, who represented one of the Apostles, chanted in German, though why he should have preferred that language to his native tongue is not made clear. I have described this celebration at some length, as it so picturesquely illustrates certain quaint customs and ceremonies of this age of colour and mystic pageants. The explosions and flashing lights greatly impressed the throng, at that time still unfamiliar with the noisy and brilliant characteristics of gunpowder.

Antonio della Scala, jealous of his brother Bartolom-

meo's superior genius and greater virtues, and eager to become sole master of Verona and Vicenza, caused him to be foully murdered, together with a faithful servant, by two hired assassins, who had lain concealed beneath his bed.

Antonio's extravagance and the splendour of his court were such that one chronicler declares he will not attempt to describe them, because no one could possibly be brought to believe him, but he nevertheless goes on to tell us, among other examples of lavish expenditure, that when Madonna Samaritana da Polenta bestowed her hand upon the Scaliger in 1382, there were no less than two hundred actors and buffoons in attendance at court, each of whom was richly equipped and generously supplied with money by the prince. Upon this occasion ten of Vicenza's most powerful nobles were dispatched to Ravenna to escort the bride to Verona, and fifteen Vicentine youths had the honour of ushering in every course that was served at the wedding feast.

The Visconti and Carraresi soon began to press hard upon the unhappy Antonio, who one day awoke to the fact that not only was he friendless but well nigh penniless as well, and that the glory of his house was indeed a thing of the past. He was no coward, however, and would not yield without a struggle. Many sharp encounters took place between his troops and the Paduans under the famous English condottiere John Hawkwood, while Antonio himself appeared more than once upon the field. Vicenza, ever loyal to the Scaligers, sustained a long and painful siege with admirable courage and fortitude, and kept the enemy

at bay until one November day in 1387, when the news came that Antonio, with Madonna Samaritana and their son Can Francesco, had sailed away down the Adige towards safety and repose within the borders of the Venetian Republic, having first handed over his domains to Wenceslaus, King of the Romans.

Within a year Antonio della Scala died, and Can Francesco soon following him to the grave, the male line of this illustrious house thus became extinct.

The Visconti, it is said, bribed Cæsar's representatives at Verona so successfully that the gates both of that city and of Vicenza were thrown open to them, and thus ended the domination of the Scaligers, a domination that had endured so long and with such varying fortune.

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One of the first acts of Gian Galeazzo, the new seigneur of the city, was to appoint the Vicentine, Bonzilio Velo, *Captain of the Hills*, and entrust to his care the confines of the territory and the mountain passes, whence the enemy might descend upon Vicenza. Marble slabs were erected at equal distances along the boundary line, bearing on one side the three serpents of the Visconti, on the other the arms of the Commune. The seigneur of Padua, to whom, according to the terms of the treaty between the Carraresi and Visconti, Vicenza should have passed, was naturally greatly incensed at the occupation and the measures adopted by Gian Galeazzo to secure the territorial boundary. The lord of Milan had claimed and now held the city in the name of his wife Caterina, a daughter of Regina

della Scala, and this breach of faith led to hostilities which broke out early in the following year.

Meanwhile Frate Pietro Filago, who later became Pope Alexander V, a man of great virtues and greater learning, had been appointed Bishop of Vicenza, and it was during his administration of the affairs of the episcopal see that the present church of San Vincenzo was built, the Visconti making a gift to the city of the site, where certain fiscal offices had stood during the Scaliger domination. A wealthy citizen, Simone Sarego, endowed the church most liberally, and caused it to be richly ornamented at his expense. Upon his death the grateful Vicentines erected a monument in his honour beneath the portico of San Vincenzo, where it may still be seen.

The Venetian Republic, the lords of Ferrara and Mantua, the Furlani and Gian Galeazzo, soon formed a coalition against Padua, whose seigneur, ever mindful of the downfall of the della Scala domination and of the treachery of the Visconti, assembled the leaders among his people, and sat long in solemn conclave with them. But the Paduans, tired of the never-ending hostilities, and anxious to enjoy the protection of the powerful Milanese, urged Francesco to accept the large sum of money which Gian Galeazzo was ready to pay for Padua and Treviso, and to content himself with the possession of Feltre and Cividale, and of his estates in Friuli. The young Francesco Novello, son and heir of the Carrarese, protested hotly against this measure, and persuaded his father to deliver the reins of government into his hands. For some time he struggled bravely against the powerful coalition but

he was at last forced to surrender, and both he and his aged father were despoiled of their possessions and driven into exile. Treviso, with several less important towns, was placed under the jurisdiction of Vicenza.

The glory and power of the Visconti had now attained its greatest height—the sun of their success had reached its zenith.

The unhappy Francesco Novello soon conspired against Gian Galeazzo, but his plot being discovered he was forced to take refuge in Florence, where he was successful in an attempt to stir up the Florentines against the Milanese, who were only too glad of an excuse for attacking the Tuscans. Taking advantage of troublous times, Francesco once more attempted to seize Padua, and his efforts were eventually crowned with success. Having taken the city, he laid siege to the strongly-fortified castle, determined to conquer or perish in the attempt.

Meanwhile Gian Galeazzo was dealing with a rebellion which had broken out in Verona in favour of a member of the della Scala family. The uprising was speedily put down, and the Milanese troops sacked the town so remorselessly, and subjected the unhappy inhabitants to such cruel treatment, that Madonna Caterina herself was moved to pity, and ordered the withdrawal of the soldiery.

Having successfully quieted Verona, Gian Galeazzo turned his attention to Francesco Novello, who was still encamped beneath the fortresses of Padua, the Duke of Bavaria having marched to his aid with a large body of troops, doing much damage in the Vicentine territory, and terrifying the inhabitants as he

pressed rapidly forwards. Joining forces with Francesco, he succeeded in taking the *castello*, and the house of Carrara was once more re-instated in Padua.

Alberto d' Este, lord of Ferrara, soon withdrew from his alliance with Gian Galeazzo and threw in his lot with Padua, and thus by the Carrarese whom he had defrauded was the first blow dealt at the power of the great Visconti. It was during the war with Florence and her allies that John Hawkwood was sent against the Milanese. For two months he hovered between Verona and Vicenza, never daring to attack because the cities were so well defended and so strongly fortified.

The following year Count d'Armignac led a body of French troops into Italy, to aid the coalition against the Milanese, whom even the greater powers were beginning to fear. He was joined by Hawkwood and his band, and a bloody engagement took place on the banks of Adda, near Bergamo, in which Gian Galeazzo's captain, Dal Verme, not only defeated d'Armignac and his allies, but made him a prisoner as well, together with the Florentine ambassadors who happened to be in his camp. Hawkwood beat a hasty retreat into Tuscany, where he defended himself with such skill and valour that Dal Verme, who had followed in hot pursuit, was obliged to forego the conquest of that region, and return to Milan.

The Vicentines, Veronese and Brescians meanwhile, under the guidance of Ugoletto Biancardo, Captain of Vicenza, had begun to build two fortresses at Castelbaldo, with the intention of advancing into the district of Padua. But, as was but natural, the over-



Photo Edne. Alinari

ARCH CALLED *DELLE SCALETTE*

lord of that city soon became alarmed at the danger that threatened his domains, and sent his brother at the head of a large body of troops to attack Biancardo, who, well aware of the superiority of the Paduans both in number and equipment, hastened to withdraw from the half-finished fortifications, which the Carrarese promptly proceeded to demolish. The Paduans then entered the Vicentine territory, bringing with them the usual amount of suffering and bloodshed.

During the succeeding year a truce was concluded between the Visconti and the allies, and for five years Vicenza enjoyed the blessings of peace. In 1397 hostilities were once more resumed, but Taddeo Dal Verme, together with two hundred of his men, being made prisoner at the battle of Governolo near Mantua, Gian Galeazzo, who meanwhile had assumed the title of Duke of Milan, signed a peace at Pavia, which might have proved lasting had not Robert of Austria lent a willing ear to the Florentines and their allies, and marching into Italy, ordered Gian Galeazzo to surrendër his sceptre and relinquish his domains to the Empire. This the Visconti very naturally refused to do, and a battle took place on the shores of Garda, in which the Vicentines bore a part. Robert was totally defeated, and forced to withdraw to Trent. He eventually repaired to Venice, where a new league against the Duke of Milan was soon formed. Vicenza now found herself in a most precarious position, owing to the near neighbourhood of the Austrian and his allies. Great preparations for defence were made, and Gian Galeazzo speedily put into execution the marvellous scheme which, had it proved successful,

must have completely changed the history of Italy. He determined to turn the swift and mighty Brenta from its natural course, bring it to Vicenza, and there allow it to unite with the Bacchiglione, thus not only depriving Padua and her territory of her principal water supply, but also crippling Venetian commerce by draining the canal that connected the city of the lagoons with Padua. All the able-bodied Vicentines who were not occupied in strengthening the fortifications of their native town were pressed into service in this great enterprise, and for four months ten thousand men laboured day and night to dig the new canal and build the mighty dams. But alas, the Brenta made short work of demolishing what had been accomplished with so much toil and at such enormous expense. Within two hours after the solemn benediction of the new channel and the closing of the natural passage, the furious river, refusing to be forced from its long accustomed course, had carried away dams, embankments, bridges and masonry, and was sweeping on to Padua as of old, in a swirl of triumphant rage.

Robert of Austria, finding that the ardour of several of his allies was rapidly cooling, determined to leave them to their own devices and return to Germany. Gian Galeazzo now found it possible to concentrate his attention upon the capture of Bologna, which soon succumbed to his violent attacks. Bentivoglio himself having fallen into the hands of the Milanese, was cast into prison, and soon put to death.

The fall of Bologna filled the Florentines with dismay, for they foresaw that the Visconti would now

attempt the conquest of Tuscany, and they hastened to appeal to Venice to help in bringing about a peace with the formidable Duke. Gian Galeazzo, however, had no intention of suspending hostilities. He even aspired, it is said, to wearing the crown of united Italy, and might indeed have achieved his purpose had not death laid the mighty spirit low. The great Visconti died in 1402 in his fifty-fifth year, leaving two sons by Madonna Caterina, and a bastard. Among these three his domains were divided.

Vicenza fell to the lot of the second son, the lad Filippo Maria, to whom Giovanni Thiene, Vicentine, acted as tutor and guardian for many years.

During Gian Galeazzo's reign Vicenza had boasted many illustrious sons. *Antonio Losco*, the poet, had the honour to compose the Visconti's epitaph; *Giorgio Corbetta* has been called the prince of mathematicians and geometricians. Frate *Giovanni Velo* was a learned and far-famed theologian, and was appointed grand inquisitor to the Marches of Treviso by Pope Benedict VII—in our eyes a doubtful honour this, but a mark of high esteem and distinction in the days of Frate Velo. Members of the Schio, Pagello, Trissino and Thiene families were already distinguished as jurists and military leaders, and the Visconti chose many of their counsellors from among the nobles of Vicenza.

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Upon the death of Gian Galeazzo his unfortunate widow, as representative of the three youthful heirs, soon found herself assailed by all those whom the strong hand of her lord had hitherto held in check. Cities and territories, dreading sack and destruction

at the hands of the Carrarese and his allies, hastened to swear fealty to the enemies of their former masters. Guglielmo della Scala and his two sons were summoned from exile by the lord of Padua and once more declared masters of Verona. Their domination there was, however, of short duration, for at the end of ten days the aged and feeble Guglielmo fell ill of a fever and died, helped into the grave, it is said, by poison ordered by the Paduan himself, who hoped to usurp the position the exiled Scaligers had once more acquired.

The Pope, and Florence also, sent out expeditions against the unhappy Visconti, and Vicenza alone of all their former possessions remained absolutely true to her oath of allegiance. An attempt was made by the Vicentines under the gallant Taddeo dal Verme to take the city of Padua, but they were driven back with great loss, their leader himself owing his life solely to the swiftness of his horse. Much fighting took place in the immediate neighbourhood of Vicenza. At last, the Lord of Padua having sent his son with fourteen thousand foot and horse to attack the city, the loyal Vicentines, after offering strenuous resistance for many hours under the leadership of Leonardo Pagello and Gian Pietro de' Proti, and being fully aware of what the ultimate result must be, held a solemn council and decided to offer their city to the Republic of Venice and implore her protection. In so doing they were acting in accordance with advice which Caterina Visconti herself had given them some weeks before, on the occasion of an appeal to her for help and defence.

Giacomo Thiene and his son-in-law *Gian Pietro de' Proti* were speedily dispatched to Venice with the

keys of the city, which they presented to the Doge Michele Steno on the twenty-eighth day of April, 1404, in the presence of the Senate, much warm and eloquent discussion taking place before the consummation of the solemn ceremony.

Vicenza being the first city of the mainland to offer spontaneous submission to Venice, earned for herself the proud title of *Eldest Daughter of the Republic*.

Having accepted the task of defending Vicenza, the "Most Serene" sent messengers to the Carrarese announcing the new order of things, and begging that the city and her territory be henceforth left in peace. But Francesco replied most arrogantly, advising the Venetians to abstain from meddling with continental affairs, and to remain quietly at home among their lagoons, and attend to their fishing and shipbuilding. The unfortunate herald who was the bearer of this insolent reply returned to his native city minus his ears and nose! The Republic must now of necessity attack the impudent Lord of Padua, and this was the beginning of a long struggle between the two powers and their allies, a struggle in which sometimes one party and sometimes the other was victorious, but which ended at last in the capture of old Francesco and two of his sons, and their execution in 1406 within the gloomy walls of the Venetian prison.

The Republic had now established her authority over Padua, Verona, Treviso, Feltre, Belluno, Bassano, Cittadella and numerous other less important townships, most of which, like Vicenza, had offered spontaneous submission, and gladly welcomed the stern but just and wise rule of the Doge and his Council.

Our city, meanwhile, had borne her share of the burden of war, and since 1404 had moreover been suffering from a terrible epidemic which lasted four-and-twenty years, exhausting and decimating the population of town and country. It was during this period of misery that Donna Vincenza had her vision on Monte Berico, and finally succeeded in 1428 in getting the sanctuary built, whereupon the "blessed Madonna and her Divine Son were graciously pleased to release the unhappy town from the scourge of pest that had so long afflicted her." But the worthy Vicentines, accusing the Jews of having brought the pest upon them, drove that unfortunate and much-persecuted people forth from their city, and confiscated such treasure and property as the wretched exiles were unable to take away with them.

Among the most celebrated men of letters of his day was *Ognibene de Bonesoli*, Vicentine, who was not only a famous Greek and Latin scholar, but a learned philosopher as well. Another Vicentine who acquired fame at this time by his vast erudition was *Gaetano Thiene*, canon of the cathedral of Padua, philosopher and theologian, who composed numerous volumes of commentaries and essays, and whose name was famous throughout Italy. *Antonio Losco*, an honour to his native city, was still writing and composing in 1428, and many of Vicenza's sons had become distinguished captains in the army of the great Republic, upon whom the numerous enemies that her prosperity had raised up against her waged incessant warfare.

Close upon the heels of the struggle with the Paduans and their allies came the war with Sigismund of Hun-



Palma the Elder

Photo Ed^{ne}. Alinari

"MADONNA ENTHRONED"
(Church of Santo Stefano)



gary, during which our city was besieged, but defended herself gallantly, and was eventually relieved by the Venetians. After Sigismund's final withdrawal into Hungary, Venice saw herself compelled to form an alliance with the Florentines against the Visconti, who threatened to seize once more the cities and territories they had so reluctantly relinquished some twenty years before. The great and formidable Count of Carmagnola, at the head of the Visconti's troops, had recently succeeded in recovering many of this powerful family's former possessions, but considering himself slighted and unjustly treated by them, he now offered his services to the Florentines and their allies the Venetians. Greatly were Venetia and Tuscany harassed for many years by the ceaseless skirmishing of the two armies, and much suffering and widespread famine resulted through the depredations of the soldiery and consequent injury to crops and property.

In 1423 the voice of Frate *Bernardino da Siena* uttered words of encouragement and comfort in San Lorenzo, and the hearts of the citizens, who crowded round his pulpit, thrilled with renewed hope and courage in response to his ardent exhortations. A pious nun, who came to be known as *Blessed Eufrosina Aurifici*, was living at this time in the convent of St. Thomas. Many were the miracles it was given this holy woman to perform both before and after her death in 1435, and great was the veneration in which she was held in her native city. She was still alive at the time of the discovery of the bodies of the martyrs in Santi Felice e Fortunato, which occasioned much rejoicing, many and solemn ceremonies taking place within the walls

of the already venerable temple. These events, all more or less mystical in nature, together with Donna Vincenza's repeated visions, kept the devout and superstitious citizens in a state of tension and nervous expectancy. Thus it came to pass that while war raged around them and the pest claimed countless victims from amongst their number, the spiritual and religious instinct of the pious Vicentines found expression in the erection of churches and convents, in pilgrimages and processions, in gorgeous ceremonies and sumptuous pageants.

A peace of short duration was concluded in 1441 between the Republic and the Duke of Milan. It was in this same year that the body of *Blessed Giovanni Cacciafronte* was removed from the Gothic tomb on the outer wall of the Cathedral, and re-interred in the chapel where it still reposes. Forty miracles, so we are told, were the result of this ceremony—the blind regained their sight, the lame cast aside their crutches, the tongues of the dumb were loosed, and the ears of the deaf opened. Thus stimulated and confirmed in their faith, the Vicentines opened wide their doors—and their purses as well—to several orders of monks and nuns, who immediately began to erect churches and convents. The Jesuits were among the first to arrive, and were soon followed by the brothers of St. Jerome of Fiesole and by the friars of the Augustine order.

While peace reigned the citizens turned their attention towards restoring the Basilica, that was in a sadly ruinous condition, and finished the tower beside it, which was carried up to its present height and furnished

with a great bell that sounded the hours. One of the twin columns of the Piazza was quarried at this time.

But the quarrel with the Visconti blazed forth anew in 1447, and for two years war continued to rage hotly, even after the death of Filippo Maria, when Francesco Sforza gave the Republic cause to suspect his loyalty.

Then came a truce which endured for six years. The canonization of Nicolò di Tolentino and of Bernardino da Siena taking place during this period, Vicenza gave herself up to rejoicing and celebration. Confraternities were founded, altars were erected, and processions to take place every twelve-month were established.

In 1452 Emperor Frederick III passed through the territory of Vicenza on his way to Rome to receive his crown from the hands of Paul II, and to wed with Eleonora, daughter of the King of Portugal. He was given hearty welcome by the Vicentines, many nobles following him to Rome, and receiving titles and honours on the occasion of his coronation.

Among the most zealous advocates and promoters of the crusade against the Turks (1455) was Frate *Lodovico Vicentino*, who, together with Frate Giovanni Capistrano, travelled all over Italy, inciting princes and people to take up arms. Many Vicentines answered the summons of their fellow-townsmen, and joined the army that was soon ready to set forth to conquer the enemy who threatened Europe herself. The Vicentine *Giovanni Maria Angiolello* having fallen into the hands of the Turks, became the slave and favourite of Mahomet's eldest son. During his captivity he not only learned the language of his masters, but celebrated their deeds of valour against the King of Persia, in a learned work

of which he compiled both an Italian and a Turkish version. Two members of the Thiene family forfeited their lives in the East at this time.

The war with the Turks, that had appeared to languish after the death of Pope Paul II, now blazed forth with renewed vigour. The infidel boldly invaded Europe, pushing westward as far as Friuli, where a terrible battle took place, which ended in a victory for the Orientals. The following year the enemy once more appeared in Friuli, advancing on this occasion to within sight of Venice herself; they were, however, repulsed by the gallant leader Carlo di Montone, and the war was finally brought to a close in 1478, when a peace was concluded between the Sultan and the Republic.

Wars succeeded each other in rapid succession during the years that elapsed between the submission of Vicenza to Venice and the peace of 1517, that ended the great Republic's struggle against the League of Cambray; and in all of these contests our city bore her share of expense and suffering. Her sons continued to distinguish themselves as captains, doctors and men of letters, and the names of Thiene, Valmarana, Trissino, Schio and Pagello occur frequently in the annals of the times. *Bartolommeo Pagello* was a poet and Latin scholar of great repute; *Nicolò Lonigo* was a far-famed physician. He it was who first translated the works of Galen from Greek into Latin, adding learned commentaries of his own. He also wrote exhaustively on many subjects, and in a manner so pleasing to Duke Ercole of Ferrara, that he was raised to the post of court physician, and, upon his

death at the ripe age of ninety, was interred with great pomp in the cathedral of Ferrara.

In the year 1492 *Blessed Bernardino da Feltre* preached four-and-twenty sermons to the citizens of Vicenza, in the course of which, like Savonarola, he inveighed against the vanity and frivolity of the age, and exhorted all to abandon the pomp of the world and devote their lives to deeds of piety and charity. Such was the effect of the saintly man's admonitions that not only was the carnival of that year allowed to pass uncelebrated, but one day in early spring the women of Vicenza brought their rich head-dresses, their false tresses, their ribbons, silks and laces to the Piazza, where the friar, having made a great heap of all these vanities, solemnly set them alight, the enthusiastic populace greeting the flames with shouts of jubilation and triumph. Two years later Bernardino returned to Vicenza, and so great was the multitude that assembled to listen to his teachings that the cathedral could not hold them, and he was obliged to preach in the open square. Several charitable societies were founded at this time through the holy man's influence, some of which are still in existence.

The Vicentines rendered willing and valuable assistance in the campaign against Charles, King of France, which terminated with the bloody battle of Fornovo-Taro, where, among many others, a member of the Thiene family, Giovanni, lost his life.

On returning to Vicenza the weary troops were consoled and refreshed by the eloquent and saintly teachings of *Frate Marco di Montegallo*, who, after a

life of labour and self-sacrifice, was come to preach charity, purity and truth to the city by the Bacchiglione. In the course of this mission the friar prophesied the day and hour of his own death, which took place on the nineteenth of March, 1496. Blessed Marco di Montegallo, like Bernardino da Feltre, was inspired by the same lofty sentiments and austere principles that, two years later, were to bring Savonarola to the stake.

In 1507 and the following years, Venice having quarrelled with the Emperor, Vicenza saw her mountain fortresses assailed and her territory invaded by the German, and great was the misery and loss of life and of property that ensued.

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Envy, jealousy and fear combined in 1509 to raise the League of Cambray against the mighty Republic of the Lagoons, and although her ruling hand rested lightly upon the much tried and weary cities of the mainland, they were nevertheless continually torn and harassed by the hostilities and strife that for so many years were destined to weigh heavily upon their regal mistress. On all sides enemies had risen up against her. Maximilian the Emperor menaced her from the north, the Pope from the south, while Louis XII and Ferdinand the Catholic threatened her possession of the kingdom of Naples, of the cities of Brescia, Cremona, Crema, Bergamo and the surrounding territories. In vain did *Leonardo Porto*, Vicentine, repair to the imperial court and sue for peace in the name of the Republic, while other am-

bassadors strove with equal unsucccess to placate the Holy Father and the monarchs of France and Spain. Venice must fight, or submit to dismemberment, and the children of her adoption on the mainland—with the exception, indeed, of Verona—appalled at the prospect of being once more subjected to the rule of grasping and bloodthirsty tyrants, rallied gallantly about her standard, and opening wide the coffers that contained their treasures, swore eternal fealty to a power that, even at that time, stood above all others for justice, progress and modernity. Vicenza, like many another city, looked to the condition of her walls and fortifications. Private citizens collected and manufactured ammunition, and the youth of town and country trained to arms.

The city made no secret of her loyal sentiments, and was one of the first to share the fate of Venice when excommunication was pronounced against her by the enraged Pontiff. *Gian Paolo Manfrone*, Vicentine, distinguished himself beneath the walls of Faenza, but was finally taken prisoner and sent to languish in enforced idleness in the prison of La Mirandola, fretted and harassed by the vague and disquieting rumours that reached him there of the struggle that was costing his beloved mistress so dear. He quivered with rage at the news of the bloody battle of Geradadda, that had resulted in a victory for the League; his jailers exultingly acquainted him with the fact that Brescia and Bergamo had been seized by France, and presently he knew that by the fall of Verona, Louis XII had acquired all the territory allotted to him by the terms of the League, the for-

tress of Cremona alone being saved by the valour of Manfrone's friend and fellow-citizen, *Francesco Marano*, who had defied the allied troops and successfully resisted their attacks. Soon there came the news that Vicenza and other cities, with the consent of Venice, unable longer to defend them, had accepted the imperial domination, and sent ambassadors to greet and pay homage to Maximilian, who was then tarrying in the Tyrol. The captive had not, however, the satisfaction of knowing that many of his companions in arms had remained true to the unhappy Republic, and, like Alessandro Trissino, fled with their adherents to the camp at Mestre.

The tide of misfortune that had set so heavily against Venice turned suddenly on the sixteenth of July—the festival of Santa Marina—when her troops once more wrenched Padua from the Emperor and entered the city triumphant. The soldiers were strictly forbidden to sack the houses of the citizens, but no decree could protect the dwellings and shops of the unfortunate Jews, many of whom forfeited their lives in vain attempts to protect their property against the cupidity of the ruthless soldiery. For forty-two days only had the imperial eagle soared above the city, and now the Lion of Mark was once more advancing with bold and rapid strides to reconquer the coveted territory. Francesco Marano and his gallant band who had so long held the fortress of Cremona, took heart again, and from their watch-towers eagerly scanned the plain that encompassed their stronghold, for the help they doubted not would soon arrive. The Emperor, now thoroughly alarmed,

concentrated his troops, to the number of nearly sixty thousand horse and foot, in and about strongly-fortified Vicenza, whose unwilling inhabitants were forced to lodge and victual them for the space of ten days. Large sums of money were also paid by the city and her suburbs to the imperial master, who, nevertheless, would appear to have allowed not only his own troops but those of his allies as well to prey upon citizen and peasant alike.

After a fruitless attack upon Padua, Maximilian once more ordered a retreat to Vicenza, whither he himself also withdrew, entering the city at the head of his great army and surrounded by the most powerful nobles of his empire. There were present among others Albert, Duke of Saxony, the Dukes of Mecklenburg and Cleves, the Prince of Anhalt, the Duke of Brunswick and Ferdinand of Bavaria, Count Palatine. The nobles and leading citizens of Vicenza went forth to meet their new overlord, and the brilliant procession, passing beneath Porta di Monte and crossing Ponte San Michele proceeded to the Piazza, where the populace, with much ceremony, took a solemn oath of allegiance to Maximilian. Having visited the Cathedral and refused the hospitality offered him at the episcopal palace, the Emperor with his troops marched to Altavilla, whither the Vicentines sent rich presents of "wax, comfits, bread, wine, oats, calves, chickens and other delicacies." Journeying from city to city Maximilian received the oaths of allegiance of his new and generally unwilling subjects throughout Venetia, and having appointed governors and installed garrisons in all the larger towns, once more crossed

the Alps and withdrew into Germany. The Prince of Anhalt and a son of the Elector of Brandenburg were left to govern the German troops garrisoned in Vicenza; Sanseverino and Gian Francesco della Mirandola were masters of the Italian detachment; while the presence of French, Spanish and Pontifical troops under generals of their own added to the misery of the overburdened city. Five hundred sick and wounded crowded her hospitals and convents, and in November a few cases of pest occurring in the suburbs, the already terrified and tortured populace was thrown into a state of veritable panic. All eyes turned to Venice for succour and deliverance. Shouts of *Viva San Marco!* broke the silence of cheerless winter nights, and the spectres of treason and rebellion began to haunt the dreams of the foreign governors. The citizens were quickly deprived of their arms, the walls and gates were guarded with redoubled vigilance, while many nobles who, like those of Verona, had hitherto openly and boldly championed the Imperial cause, fled in terror to the court at Trent, appalled by the prospect of revolution and the consequent vengeance of the long-suffering people.

But Venice answered the city's appeal, and in the grey dawn of the thirteenth of November, after four-and-twenty hours of strife, the imperial troops marched forth defeated from Vicenza, while the Venetians entered triumphant by Porta di Padova. The citizens did not seek to hide their satisfaction and delight. The bells clanged loudly, while shouts of *Marco, Marco!* — *Viva la Repubblica!* rang out exultant, and the banner of Venice appeared as by magic on every



Buonconsiglio

"MADONNA ENTHRONED"

(Church of San Rocco)

Photo Edn^e. Alinari

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tower, and floated from every balcony and loggia. The retreating Germans and their allies, followed by a whistling, hooting, jeering throng, were glad to hasten their steps and leave far behind them the city that hated them so cordially. As a mark of her devotion and gratitude Vicenza, early in the following year, made a free gift to the Republic of the sum of ten thousand ducats.

Meanwhile the Pope, turning a deaf ear to the remonstrances of Maximilian and other members of the League, with whom he had recently quarrelled, not only relieved Venice from the sentence of excommunication, but proclaimed himself her ally as well. But before many months had elapsed the Germans, having conquered once more, were back again in Vicenza, and we find the unhappy population forced to offer humble submission to the stern and relentless Duke of Anhalt. A time of terrible suffering, of bloodshed and extortion, followed. The Monte di Pietà was stripped of all its deposits; the Sanctuary of Berico, whither many Vicentines had carried their treasures, was sacked and desecrated; in the great cave at Masano six hundred refugees—men, women and children—were stifled by the smoke of fires that were set to smoulder at the entrance, while in Vicenza no less than seven thousand persons died of pest. But history was being made swiftly in those troublous days, and before the end of the year the Venetians had ousted the Germans once more.

The vicissitudes of this first year of the war between Venice and the League may be taken as illustrative of the eight years that intervened before peace

was finally concluded at Verona in 1517. The complicated and varied story of the great struggle teems with the romance, valour and pomp, as well as with the misery, treachery and squalor of the Middle Ages. The appearance of a comet fills the people with dismay ; droughts, earthquakes and intense cold combine with the pest to impoverish and decimate the population ; Spaniards, French, Germans and the Pope's followers sack and plunder by turn, and the story of Vicenza in those days is the story of many another equally unfortunate town. Many of her citizens distinguish themselves by deeds of valour or of sacrifice, and Giovanni Paolo Manfrone, freed at last from the dungeons of La Mirandola, draws his impatient sword once more against the enemy, The fierce Colonna—Marc' Antonio and Fabrizio—the gallant Bayard, *sans peur et sans reproche*—Gaston de Foix, destined to end his young life at Ravenna—Francesco Sanseverino, nicknamed *Capitan Fracasso*—Alviano the great Venetian leader, and hosts of others are among the familiar figures that crowd the pages of the history of this war. The octogenarian Pope Julius II rides forth at the head of his army in the dead of winter and lays unsuccessful siege to Ferrara, and dying presently is succeeded by the Medici pope, known as Leo X ; Ferdinand the Catholic yields his throne to the Austrian Charles ; Louis XII passes away, leaving his sceptre to Francis I ; Maximilian, deserted and betrayed, retires into Germany, and there is peace at last and prosperity in store for our city, under the just and gentle rule of the triumphant Republic.

Meanwhile, despite suffering, poverty and warfare,

her school of art has come into being, and the *Montagna*, *Buonconsiglio*, *Tintorello*, *Fogolino*, *Verla* and *Speranza* had already begun to cover the walls of her churches and convents with their touching and naïve conceptions, and had created glowing altar-pieces that still excite admiration and speak in convincing language to all lovers of truth in art.

Monkish architects, whose names history has failed to chronicle, had already either restored the churches of the early centuries or raised elaborate Gothic edifices, such as the great temple dedicated to San Lorenzo, and in the year following the close of the war, Andrea Palladio first saw the light—Palladio, that son of whom Vicenza is so justly proud, and whose genius has lent such brilliant lustre to her name.

* * * * *

From the end of the struggle against the League until the fall of Venice before triumphant Bonaparte in 1797, Vicenza's history is little more than one long chronicle of the names of Venetian *Podestàs* and governors, of times of pest, famine, and flood, of bloody engagements with the troops of rival cities, and of internal wranglings. But despite adversity in many forms, there was much progress in various ways, and science, letters and art began little by little to occupy the attention of the classes who had, heretofore, consecrated their energy exclusively to the pursuit of arms. Diplomacy was beginning to be looked upon as a possible alternative to war, and early in the sixteenth century several Vicentines of rank distinguished themselves as ambassadors and peace-

makers in the service of the Republic and of other powers.

Thus *Leonardo Nogarola*, who was eloquent in many tongues, was sent by Charles V on a mission to Russia and Poland, acquitting himself with honour and to the complete satisfaction of all concerned. A later embassy to Soliman, who had threatened Vienna herself, would appear to have resulted in much personal satisfaction to the cultured and smooth-tongued diplomatist, to whom the Sultan became deeply attached, lavishing upon him honours and rich gifts. The advantage from this embassy was, however, but slight as far as Leonardo's master was concerned, and for more than half a century longer the spectre of the invading Turk continued to haunt the council-chambers and national assemblies of eastern Europe.

Another Vicentine emissary was the Benedictine, *Zaccaria Milana*, bishop of Guardia in Dalmatia, whom the Holy Father dispatched to the court of Poland, where he successfully exerted his powerful influence against the wave of heresy that was beginning to rise under Luther's auspices in the states of the north. It was through Zaccaria Milana that King Casimir of Poland came to be canonized, and the service still performed in his honour on his festival was composed and arranged by the Vicentine prelate.

A second famous theologian of the early sixteenth century was *Francesco Chiericato*, who attended the Diet of Nuremburg in the quality of papal nunzio.

Girolamo Schio, confidant and counsellor of three popes, was deeply skilled in statecraft and diplomacy, and had the honour not only of bringing about a recon-

ciliation between Charles V and the Holy Father, but of accompanying the Emperor on his journey to Rome and assisting him at his coronation.

The battle of Pavia and the dread of imperial domination led the Pope and Venice to take up arms in defence of the Sforza. Thus Vicenza once more saw many of her citizens distinguish themselves on the field of battle. *Giulio Manfrone*, son of the gallant *Gian Paolo*, met his death at Cremona, and his aged father, animated by the spirit of the heroes of old, instead of giving himself up to grief and despair, immediately hastened to the seat of war and placed himself at the head of the troops his son had commanded. The octogenarian *Gian Paolo* was killed two years later near Pavia by a German bullet. His grandson and many other descendants of this dauntless warrior bore arms with distinction and valour in the ranks of the Venetians during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Count *Ippolito Porto*, whose bones now rest in San Lorenzo, was one of Charles' favourite captains. He it was who, at the battle of Mühlberg in 1547, dragged the unhappy Johan Friedrich of Saxony a prisoner to the feet of the Emperor. For this capture, that meant so much to the imperial cause, Ippolito was laden with honours and riches. For many years he served the Venetian Republic as military governor of important garrisons, and was finally sent forth by her to fight the oft-invading Turk. This he did successfully in Dalmatia, Albania and Corfu, of which island he was eventually appointed governor, dying there in 1572.

Prasildo, Clemente and *Giulio Thiene* were all valiant captains. *Prasildo* perished at the siege of Parma early in the sixteenth century. *Clemente*, in the service of the Duke of Urbino, distinguished himself at Pesaro, and was created commander-in-chief of the Duke's forces, holding high rank in the Venetian army as well. The Lord of Ferrara was also among the number of his patrons, and appointed him "Vice-Duke" of Modena. *Giulio* served many masters and championed many causes. We find him fighting under the Strozzi, the Lords of Ferrara and of Urbino, while the King of Naples and other princes frequently consulted him on questions relating to mathematics, in which science he excelled.

Niccolo Losco also made his name famous as a captain, serving in France under Francis I, Henry II and Charles IX. In the numerous campaigns against the Turks that were brought to a close by the battle of Lepanto, the Vicentines bore a prominent part, and the names of Schio, Trissino, Gualdo, Savio, Porto, Sesso and many others, may be found on every page of the history of these times. The city in her loyal enthusiasm often equipped galleys and maintained contingents at her own expense, and liberal indeed were her contributions towards the expenses of the Republic's campaigns.

It was in memory of the battle of Lepanto that Palladio was commissioned to erect the new Palazzo del Capitano—that glory of the Piazza, surpassed only by the greater glory of the builder's masterpiece, the mighty Basilica. Of the artists and skilled labourers who were Palladio's contemporaries I have treated



elsewhere, but of the men of letters and of science who flourished at this time a few words may not be out of place.

Antonio Pigafetta, a Knight of the Order of St. John, eager for adventure and knowledge, sailed with Magellan, and on his return described his journey in several lengthy volumes, one of which he presented to Charles at Valladolid, another to Catherine de' Medici, a third to the Grand Master of Rhodes and a fourth to Pope Clement. This last, discovered among the manuscripts of the Ambrosiana of Milan, was published for the first time in the year 1800. The love of wandering long remained a characteristic of the Pigafetta family. A certain *Filippo*, who may have been Antonio's son or nephew, died in 1604, after having journeyed to many countries and visited many foreign courts. He bore arms with distinction against the Sultan, was present at the siege of Paris by Henry of Navarre, travelled to Hungary, where he participated in the strife that was distracting that unhappy country, and finally returning to Italy, became the friend and favourite of many princes, and the private chamberlain of the Sovereign Pontiff. His leisure he employed in composing descriptions and chronicles of his travels and of the wars in which he had borne a part. He also translated largely from the Spanish.

Ferdinando Thiene and *Lodovico Nogarola*—Vicentines—were summoned by Pope Clement, together with many other learned jurists, to advise him upon the question of the repudiation of Catherine of Aragon. The sentences of these Vicentines, which, it is needless

to say, staunchly maintained the perfect legality of the marriage, carried great weight with Clement, and are believed to have strongly influenced him in his decision. Thiene, dying at the age of eighty-eight, retained to the last the wonderful memory for which he had been distinguished throughout life.

Bernardino Rutilio, jurist, abstained from the practice of law and entered the priesthood. Having accompanied Cardinal Ridolfi to Rome, he soon acquired renown by his studies in civil and ecclesiastical law, and by his commentaries on Cicero. Three orations which he had the honour to deliver before Charles V on important questions relating to the Church, earned for him not only the monarch's esteem and admiration, but the title of Knight as well. Several learned works by Rutilio issued from the presses of Venice, and in 1540 he was appointed professor of civil law at the university of Avignon. Death, however, overtook him before he had completed his preparations for the journey into France.

Leonardo Porto was a learned geometrician, a student of jurisprudence, and one of the first scholars to devote both time and careful research to the study of numismatics. His great work on the weights, measures and coins of antiquity excited the appreciative admiration both of Charles V and of the Venetian Republic, by whom he was raised to posts of high honour and rich emolument.

Gian Giorgio Trissino, friend and patron of Palladio and Maganza, was the founder of the precursor of the Olympic Academy—that circle composed of men of letters, of scientists and artists, that held its meetings

at Trissino's villa near Vicenza, still known as *Cricoli*. It is difficult to decide whether to place him among the famous diplomatists and statesmen or among the great writers of his time, for his was a many-sided genius. The high rank and wealth of the family from which he was sprung procured for him easy admission to the courts of princes, and his own personal worth and charm endeared him to high and low alike. Two Popes availed themselves of his services as ambassador to the King of Denmark and to the Emperor, who conferred upon him the order of the Golden Fleece. His influence was strongly felt at many courts, and the cardinal's hat was offered him by the Sovereign Pontiff in acknowledgment of his manifold and valuable services. This honour, however, he was forced to forego, as he desired to marry and preserve his race from extinction. Of his intercourse with the artists and architects of Vicenza mention has been made in another chapter. His leisure was given up to study and composition, and many were the learned and finished productions of his fertile pen. Trissino was the first Italian to write in blank verse, as Rucellaj (to whom this distinction is often attributed) himself acknowledges in the introduction to *Le Api*. Disgusted and outraged by the licentious and ribald nature of the literature of the period, he strove to awaken interest in and appreciation of works dealing with patriotic and classical subjects. He is still widely known and admired through his *Italia Liberata dei Goti* and his *Sofonisba*. Taking the Greeks as his models, he essayed to imbue a century of pomp and frivolity with the simplicity

and earnestness of classic days. Being, moreover, somewhat wanting in imagination and fancy, his compositions lack spirit and colour, and his *Sofonisba* is as pale and faint in tone as are the faded and incorporeal representations of her with which Tiepolo adorned the walls of Villa Valmarana on Berico. The poet, blind, as was but natural, to his own shortcomings, attributed the meagre success of his compositions to the purity and austerity that characterized them, and gave voice to his disappointment and indignation in the famous lines—

Sia maledetta l'ora e il giorno, quando

Presi la penna, e non cantai d'Orlando !

Trissino's greatest merit in literature lies in the fact that he raised his voice and used his powerful influence against the immoralities and corruption of the age.

Nor were the women of Vicenza strangers to the pursuit of letters. Foremost amongst the poets of the day was *Maddalena Campiglia*, a woman of singular talents and lofty virtues, the friend and confidant of men of genius, artists and princes. The house which now occupies the site of Maddalena's residence bears an inscription in memory of the gentle and cultured lady.

Merchants and artificers were beginning to acquire large fortunes and honourable positions. *Giorgio Capobianco*, the jeweller, enjoyed the admiration not only of his fellow-citizens but of many foreign princes and powerful prelates as well. Such was his cunning in the goldsmith's art that five of his masterpieces have

deserved to be chronicled on the pages of history. The first, a ring containing a tiny watch, saved its author's life when he was under sentence of death for the murder of an enemy in Rialto. Giorgio sent the ring as a present to the Duke of Urbino, who was so delighted with the ornament that he interceded successfully with the officers of justice on the goldsmith's behalf. A second creation consisted of a wonderful candlestick that contained a small clock, which, on striking the hour, was so arranged as to set the candle alight. A silver barge, that contained many figures moved by clockwork, was sent as a present by the Most Serene Republic to Sultan Soliman. A fourth invention consisted of a set of ivory chess-men contained in a walnut shell, and the fifth masterpiece was a magnificent lamp which was presented to the Cathedral of Milan. Having occupied for years the responsible and honourable position of engineer-in-chief to the Republic, Capobianco at last repaired to Rome, where he was appointed custodian of the Pontiff's private library, and where, having attained a great age, he finally died.

A certain *Gaspare Gatto*, a silk merchant of Vicenza, emigrated to England in the early sixteenth century, and there not only set up his spinning-wheels and looms but actually introduced sericulture. Gatto enjoyed great consideration in the land of his adoption, and had the honour of personally presenting Queen Elizabeth with a pair of exquisite silken hose made from material produced in her own domains. This Gatto entertained Pigafetta on the occasion of his visit to England, and was strongly suspected of heresy

by the Holy Office of Vicenza. His departure from his native town was probably due to the decrees which Venice issued against the silk industry in that city. The Bride of the Adriatic wishing to monopolize this trade, forbade the spinning or weaving of silk in Vicenza, where much fine merchandise had previously been produced. Permission was at last wrested from the Senate to weave black velvet for the space of three years, and finally the industry was thrown open to all, and became a source of wealth throughout the province.

Of heresy there was much in Vicenza towards the middle of the sixteenth century, although at the same time convents and churches were rapidly multiplying. The Inquisition found work to do in the city, and did it unflinchingly and thoroughly. In 1547 forty heretics were put to death, and many citizens of the upper classes fled to Switzerland, where they openly embraced Protestantism. Nor could the new creed fail to acquire disciples in a community where so many cultured and distinguished men and women discussed the burning questions of the hour—in a city that boasted Cricoli and the drawing-room of Maddalena Campiglia. The Casa Pigafetta often opened its doors to the meetings of an heretical society, composed of some forty members all belonging to distinguished families, who were unanimous in declaring that the Church stood in dire need of reform, and that the Bible should be the sole foundation of religion. *Giambattista Trento* emigrated to England, and was a leader among the Italian Protestants of London. He was condemned by the Holy Office of Vicenza in 1570,

but remained safe in London until his death. He was an intimate of Walsingham.

But the Reformation made no converts among the lower and uncultured classes, who lived in awe of heretics, whose "damnable iniquity" was carefully pointed out by the zealous friars and theologians who kindled and kept alight the fires of Inquisition.

Those twin scourges of the Middle Ages—pestilence and famine—had never ceased to torture Venetia. In the year 1528 the spotted fever raged throughout Italy, and was followed by a famine far-reaching and deadly. So great was the number of orphans left to wander from door to door at the end of this time of affliction that many good and holy men were moved to pity, and set about founding asylums and hospitals for their reception. One of the earliest of these philanthropists was the Venetian nobleman Girolamo Miani, who founded the order of the Somaschi, the name being taken from the town of Somasca, where the friars were first installed, and who has been canonized as San Girolamo dei Somaschi. His first asylum was opened in Venice, and others were soon established in Milan, Bergamo and Vicenza. The house in this latter town was called the *Ospedale della Misericordia*, and to this day harbours within its charitable walls a large family of female orphans. A beautiful picture by Maganza, representing San Girolamo and his orphans in the presence of the Madonna, graces the otherwise uninteresting church connected with the institution.

Vicenza's own saint, *Gaetano*, was a member of the *Thiene* family, a race more given to fighting than to

religious practices. Having passed his youth in acts of devotion and self-sacrifice in Vicenza, he repaired to Venice where he devoted himself to the amelioration and establishment of hospitals for incurables. Together with three companions who joined him in Rome, he founded a religious order whose members were known as the *Teatini*. These pious men took the three great vows of poverty, chastity and celibacy, and devoted their lives to deeds of charity, to prayer and meditation. Gaetano died in Naples in 1547, and a church was erected in his honour on the Corso in Vicenza soon after his canonization. His memory is still held in high esteem, and his intercession is still often solicited by his pious fellow-citizens of this twentieth century.

Ignatius Loyola is said to have tarried in Vicenza with his band of followers before the final institution of his order, and to have said Mass in several of the city's churches.

The presence within her walls of such men as Gaetano, Loyola and Girolamo, as well as of the Capuchin monks and the many other religious orders who had taken up their abode there, kept alive in Vicenza the traditions of Catholicism and strengthened its hold upon the people.

In those days it was the fashion for the sons of Venetian nobles to reside, for a time at least, at foreign courts. Thus *Scipione Piovene* lived for many years at the court of France, where he became an especial favourite with Catherine de' Medici. His horsemanship was marvellous, and Henry appointed him Grand Equerry of France, much to the chagrin of several

French nobles who had aspired to that post. During her regency Catherine sent the faithful Italian on an important mission to Guise, who was in Ancona. Piovene rode from St. Quentin to Ancona in six days and a half—it is said—but upon arriving, died of fatigue, to the great grief of his royal mistress. Another Piovene was governor of Cyprus, where he died after many deeds of valour and benevolence.

The nobles of Vicenza were lavish in their hospitality, and many were the distinguished guests whom they entertained. The history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, indeed, is little more than a chronicle of gay entertainments, solemn receptions and brilliant pageants, alternating with times of suffering from pest and famine, and of fighting with northern neighbours to protect the boundaries between the Venetian territory and the Tyrol.

But there was hardly fighting enough at home, under the firm but peaceful rule of the Republic, to suit the bold spirit of many in whose veins flowed the hot blood of generations of warriors. Thus *Galeazzo Gualdo*, when only fifteen years of age, was doing battle in Flanders under the Prince of Orange. Advancing to the rank of captain under Ernst von Mansfelt, Gualdo followed him to England, where he remained for some time. Under Moritz von Nassau, Gualdo journeyed to Africa, and later on we find him fighting by the side of Ferdinand II. In 1634 the restless soldier raised a regiment in Vicenza and marched against the Turks in the service of the Venetian Republic. Later he was summoned by Mazarin and entrusted with the compiling of a history of the

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recent revolution, while the King created him Maréchal. His must have been a fascinating personality, for honours were literally showered upon him. Christina of Sweden made him her chamberlain and her representative at several courts; the Sovereign Pontiff conferred upon him the citizenship of Rome, and Venice appointed him Knight of St. Mark. In 1663 he returned to Vicenza, taking up his abode in the Gualdi mansion on the Piazzuola, and devoting his leisure to the composition of his memoirs and of a history of his native town. This man of genius—warrior, diplomatist and historian—died in 1678, and was buried in San Lorenzo.

The terrible pestilence that raged in the year 1630, causing the death of eleven thousand persons in Vicenza alone, did not spare the city's conscientious and picturesque historian, *Silvestro Castellini*, whose chronicle ends abruptly with the year 1629, within a few weeks of his death.

Padre Barbarano, the contemporary and friend of Castellini, compiled the ecclesiastical history of Vicenza.

Many churches were built in Vicenza towards the close of the seventeenth century, and among others the present Sanctuary on Berico. But the Barocco was invading and corrupting life as it had invaded and corrupted art, and the pomposity and empty show of the eighteenth century was nowhere better illustrated than in Vicenza, whose nobles no longer sought distinction in art and learning, but rather in the ball-room and at the brilliant assembly. Extravagance and splendour made sad havoc of many large fortunes ;



Photo Edne. Alinari

CHURCH OF SAN LORENZO—MAIN DOOR



tournaments took place in the great hall of the Basilica, and wonderful pageants in the Piazza. The introduction of coffee and newspapers brought new habits and new modes of life. The greatness of the Republic was already beginning to decline, but her ancient prestige still held in check both Austria and Spain. Wars there were indeed—wars against the still threatening Turk, and skirmishings along the northern frontier, but the country was no longer torn and harassed by invading armies, and crushed by heavy taxation. “Let politics alone and refrain from overmuch discussion of religious matters,” said Venice to her subjects, and her subjects obeying, lived in peace and prosperity under her equitable rule. Geniuses were few in those days of noise and merry-making, but general culture was more broadly diffused than ever before; the masses were beginning to emerge from the slough of ignorance and superstition in which they had so long been content to rest. There was haste in all things, in living as in art—Cambiaso actually painting with both hands to save time—a haste that made good work impossible, that rendered scientific research irksome, and banished calm meditation and thoughtful study.

During this era of affectation, coquetry, effeminacy and vanity, life in Vicenza was more or less the counterpart of life in Venice, which Goldoni—that painter not of individuals but of society—so ably illustrated in his delightful comedies.

With the exception of Morea, which she had lost by the peace of Passarowitz, Venice still retained her ancient possessions, and although there was much

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irregularity in her administration of justice and of the revenues, she may nevertheless be said to have sunk less deep into corruption than most of her neighbours. Society, however, was shockingly corrupt, and over-refinement of manners was but a cloak for moral depravity. Even the worldly and light-minded clergy gave themselves up to the pursuit of pleasure, and joined heartily in the gaming that was now carried on in almost every drawing-room, or attended the horse-races that took place in Vicenza at frequent intervals on the Piazza d'Armi. The Carnival had degenerated into a time of licence and brawling, and the custom of wearing masks in the street gave rise to much crime and bloodshed.

Literature reflected the spirit of the times, and produced either works in pompous and futile imitation of the classics, or novels and comedies so scurrilous as to be unfit for perusal. Goldoni, disgusted by these licentious and worthless productions, exerted his genius to amuse and instruct by more honest means, and lived to see the beginning of the movement of reform that, through the purifying and ennobling fire of the French Revolution, led at last to that ardent patriotism and to those higher planes of thought that, in Italy, found glorious expression in the political events of the nineteenth century.

A difference that arose between the Republic and the Sovereign Pontiff concerning the appointment of the Patriarch of Aquileia aroused in Venetia a sentiment of angry rebellion; the teachings and doctrines of Fra Paolo Sarpi were once more recalled, and his broad principles and outspoken independence of thought

began to bear fruit. Venice promptly asserted her right to rule supreme within her own boundaries, and was the first Catholic power to impose taxation upon ecclesiastical property without the sanction of the Holy See. Priests, monks and nuns were admonished to render obedience to the laws of the Republic; many convents were suppressed and several orders expelled. In 1773 the Jesuit college in Vicenza was abolished, and the fathers, together with the Somaschi friars, were requested to withdraw from the province. The leaven of modernity was beginning to stir, and was destined to strengthen and uphold the spirit of the nation through the dark days that were to come.

Two years later Girolamo Barbaro came as the last Venetian governor; presently a detachment of French troops passed through Vicenza, filling her inhabitants with dark forebodings. They were followed soon by ten thousand horse and foot led by Napoleon himself, who spent the night in Palazzo Cordellina, and next day marched to meet the Austrians at Bassano. A month later General Masséna appeared, and the city was saddened by the sufferings of the sick, the wounded and the prisoners, who were constantly being brought within her gates. The churches of San Lorenzo and of Santa Corona were converted into hospitals at this time. After the battle of Arcole the defeated Austrians fell back on Vicenza, and for many months bodies of troops—now French, now German, were continually passing through or near the city, causing much discomfort, damage and loss.

In 1797 the Most Serene Republic bowed her proud neck before all-conquering Bonaparte, and Vicenza

was officially occupied. Thus ended the Venetian domination, that had lasted for nearly four centuries.

General La Hotz took possession of the Eldest Daughter of the Republic, and the Tree of Liberty was raised in the Piazza amidst great jubilation. For the spirit of democracy in the modern sense had taken hold upon the shallow people, and deadened the pain caused by the downfall of the once all-powerful Venice. Women clad as Liberty and her court rode in gaily-decorated carts through the streets crowded with merry-makers; the feudal code and numerous obnoxious decrees were reduced to ashes at the foot of the Tree; the National Guard was immediately organized, and churches and convents were stripped of their lamps and other silver ornaments, which were promptly turned over to the mint. But a reaction soon set in. The prices of all commodities rose appallingly; the lower classes began to murmur and exhibit signs of dissatisfaction, and Vicenza was not long in discovering that she had been better off before her acquisition of this so-called liberty. A mild rebellion was quickly put down by the French, and several popular leaders were placed under arrest, while here, as elsewhere, the populace awoke to the fact that the loudly vociferated title of the "sovereign people," was but empty sound.

It must, however, be admitted that the laws enacted and the reforms introduced by the French were just and salutary. The Inquisition, which at the time of their advent still existed in a mild form, sentences being passed by the friars of Santa Corona, was immediately abolished; burying within the city was for-

bidden, and the streets were ordered to be properly lighted. But the large contribution—nearly four hundred thousand lire—exacted by the new masters was bitterly resented by all classes.

By the terms of the treaty of Campo Formio, Bonaparte relinquished Vicenza to Austria. This was a blow indeed, and the city gave herself up to despair. Now that the great change was imminent she realized the advantages she was about to forfeit. The first act of the Austrians was to overthrow the Tree of Liberty, and presently the French code was set aside and the laws and regulations of former days were re-established.

In 1799 a band of Cossacks rode into Vicenza on their small, swift horses, and the population looked with awe and horror upon this strange race, that ate raw meat and made ignorant inquiries concerning the distance that separated them from Paris. Troops were continually passing, and much suffering resulted from their depredations.

The French took possession again in 1805, and the Teatro Olimpico, that had so often been illuminated in honour of Austrian victories, now re-echoed to the grandiloquent harangues that welcomed the advent of Masséna, come to install the temporary government and—levy a tax of six million lire. The peace of Presbourg allotted Venetia to the kingdom of Italy under Beauharnais, who visited Vicenza in the following year with his wife, Amelia of Bavaria. Among the dukes created by Napoleon was the Duke of Vicenza, Colincourt himself, with an annual charge upon the city of sixty thousand francs. One of the

many wise measures adopted by the French was the cataloguing of all church property, and the city and province, like the rest of the kingdom, saw innumerable reforms introduced and many much needed improvements made. Roads and bridges were built, dikes constructed, public buildings erected or restored, prisons and hospitals rebuilt, and a lycée established. But in 1807, alas, the city was shorn of many of her art treasures, which were dispatched to Paris to grace the triumph of the conqueror. Several of these works, however, were fortunately detained in Milan, where, they remained until a fresh political upheaval made their return to Vicenza possible.

Bonaparte visited the city in 1807 with the Queen of Bavaria, upon which occasion the Teatro Olimpico was the scene of a brilliant celebration. Solemn Te Deum was sung in the Cathedral, and great was the rejoicing on the birth of the King of Rome, while popular jubilation waxed high upon the reception of the news that Napoleon had entered Moscow. Soon, however, the passing of troops began again, and the inhabitants of the surrounding territory saw themselves despoiled of cattle, grain and fodder, and, as a compensation, in possession of a slip of flimsy paper which promised payment at the end of six months. But before these bonds could be presented for redemption the Austrians were back again, and the Peace of Vienna made Venetia a part of the great Empire once more.

* * * * *

For many years Austria was destined to reign supreme, but the inhabitants of Lombardy and Venetia had tasted of liberty and experienced the benefits of



progress under the French domination, and the seed of dissatisfaction with ancient forms and abuses that had been sown broadcast by the Revolution was bound to germinate, and, in time, come into glorious fruition throughout the Peninsula. Rebellion was, for the time being, impossible, but discontent and hatred of the Teuton could not be eradicated from the hearts of the people. For four-and-thirty years the provinces of the famous Quadrilateral chafed and fretted, while the Carbonari and Mazzini worked incessantly to prepare the great uprising that was to free the country from the foreign yoke.

In 1824 the Milanese patriot Confalonieri was lodged for one night in the prison tower of Vicenza on his way to the torments of the Spielberg. Silvio Pellico's imprisonment and sufferings, the persecutions inflicted upon countless patriots, the bitter and cutting sarcasm of the writings of their fellow-townsmen *Francesco Testa* and *Lorenzo Tornieri*, together with frequent but always unsuccessful attempts at revolt, kept alive the ardent enthusiasm of the Vicentines and their painful longing for freedom.

The years of peace that were forced upon the country so much against her will produced great prosperity, the fertility of her soil and the industry and intelligence of her inhabitants rendering her one of the richest districts in Italy, and making her possession ever more precious to Austria, many of whose laws and provisions must in justice be recognized as beneficent and wise. But there were many grounds for discontent. Every question of any importance concerning the city's administration was referred to Vienna; the judges

and municipal magistrates were almost all Germans ; Vicentine youths were sent away to serve in Austrian regiments ; priests must swear fealty to the Austrian monarch, and the appointing of bishops was a prerogative of the Emperor. Private correspondence was violated ; spies were everywhere ; prominent citizens suffered arrest and long imprisonment on the strength of suspicion only ; and public instruction was so organized as to produce superficiality and loyalty to Austria alone. Nevertheless, when Ferdinand succeeded Francis I in 1835 and a far-reaching amnesty was proclaimed, the enthusiasm produced by this moment of alleviation was such as to cause the citizens of Vicenza to welcome the youthful monarch with open arms on the occasion of his visit to their city.

But the ferment and feverish, though suppressed, excitement of the year '47 roused Vicenza to action, and she bore herself valiantly and proudly during the terrible months of struggle that ended, in her case, simply in enhancing her sufferings beneath the foreign yoke. Meanwhile, however, moments of glory and rejoicing awaited her. Thanks to the patriotism and daring of her sons and daughters, and to the abnegation and executive skill of such men as *Mariano* and *Don Giuseppe Fogazzaro*—father and uncle of the famous novelist,—*Valentino Pasini*, and countless others, the Austrians were forced to withdraw on the twenty-fifth of March, 1848. The National Guard immediately occupied the Loggia del Capitanio, and shouts of *Viva l'Italia ! Viva Pio IX ! Viva la Libertà !* greeted the proclamation of Italian independence and the adhesion of Vicenza to the re-established Republic of Venice.

A body of troops calling themselves the *Crociati* or Crusaders, and composed largely of Paduan and Vicentine youths, was quickly organized under General Sanfermo, and soon marched away in the direction of Verona. Poor boys, going forth many of them to meet their death, armed some with ancient and rusty rifles, some with pikes or scythes, a few sitting proudly astride of worn-out cart horses representing the cavalry, while some four wretched cannon taken from the fortifications stood for the artillery and progressed slowly behind heavily-plodding bullocks.

Prince Lichtenstein's detachment met the pitiful band of enthusiasts near *Montebello* and, after some hours of hard fighting, routed them completely. There were many deeds of valour, however, on that fatal day, and many lads sold their lives dear to the well-armed veterans of Austria's victories on other fields. Upon the scene of the hot struggle a trumpeter who still wore the Austrian uniform was summarily executed. The boy, a native of Brescia, who had been forced into service in a German regiment, died shouting: "*Viva l'Italia! Infame Austria!*" Eight-and-twenty prisoners were dispatched to Verona after the battle.

Vicenza now set to work with renewed energy to prepare for the attack that must soon come. Private citizens made spontaneous offerings of money and valuables. Among other gifts there exists the record of a "splendid ring, set with gems, presented to its owner by Nicholas of Russia." A priest gladly sacrificed a gold medal which he had received from Austria in recognition of his broad and numerous public charities. The venerable Bishop *Cappellari*

raised his trembling hand in benediction above the barricades that defended the gates, while the priests encouraged their flocks, and urged them on to fresh and more determined effort. Stirring manifestoes were published instructing the Vicentines concerning their behaviour and defence in case of attack, and all were eager to measure their strength with that of the enemy. The crusaders had rallied bravely after their first defeat, and many fresh volunteers had joined their ranks. Throughout the province encounters took place, and upon several occasions victory favoured Italy. But many were the promising young lives forfeited on the bloody fields of battle, and many the patriotic hearts sent to break in Austrian prisons.

The twentieth of March brought a fierce attack on Vicenza herself, where the volunteers had mustered to the number of three thousand five hundred. Through the fields of winter wheat the Croats came creeping, dragging themselves along on hands and knees ; but when within a gunshot of the walls they were discovered and greeted with a murderous volley. Hereupon the reserve forces rushed forward, and a fierce struggle followed. Five hours of fighting left Vicenza victorious, and the Austrians saw themselves forced to retreat. Carrying their dead with them, they halted at certain loosely-built houses beyond the walls, which they set afire, after having placed within them the bleeding bodies of their comrades, and this that the number of the slain might not be ascertained by the enemy.

During the night that followed this victory reinforcements of trained troops reached Vicenza. *Manin*

and *Tommaseo* arrived from Venice, heartening and inspiring the city by their presence, and the Pope's general, *Durando*, appeared at the head of five thousand Swiss and Romans. An attempt to recover from the retreating Austrians the booty in the form of cattle and provisions which they had seized in the surrounding country ended in a defeat for the Italians and much loss of life, General *Antonini* forfeiting his right hand, which he sent as a trophy to his gallant volunteers. On March the twenty-second the news that the enemy was returning spread rapidly through the city, and on the morrow a bold reconnoitring expedition undertaken by the Vicentine patriot *Luigi Parisotto* revealed their presence on the Verona road, and in close proximity to Vicenza. A wet and dark night witnessed the attack made simultaneously at several points. It is said that every window and every shop in the city was open and brightly lighted; that the entire population took part in the defence, and that, while bombs were bursting on all sides, women and children helped to transport powder and ammunition from the neighbourhood of one of the gates to a place of greater safety near the tower in the Piazza. And Victory once more smiled on the efforts of Italy's patriots. Morning saw the Austrians, under Prince Thurn-Taxis, on their way to Verona. Their losses were heavy, and bitter was their sense of humiliation at this second repulse.

It was, however, not to be expected that the enemy would refrain from fresh attack, as Vicenza, lying as she does on the road from Verona to Vienna, was a most important possession to the masters of the

Quadrilateral. General Durando therefore set to work constructing earthworks and erecting barricades on the heights and at all unprotected points. Officers and detachments were appointed for the defence of the different districts, *Massimo d'Azeglio* and *Cialdini* being placed in command of the troops on Monte Berico. Of the battle of the tenth of June I have spoken elsewhere.

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For eleven years after the thrilling events of 1848 no ray of promise shone through the heavy cloud of oppression that enshrouded the downtrodden people. Petty persecutions galled the rebellious spirits of all classes. A word spoken in a moment of enthusiasm might prove the supposed friend a spy, and mean months or even years of exile or imprisonment to the unhappy patriot. The conditions that had existed before the uprising were rendered more intolerable by the increased rigour of the authorities and by the discouraging news that was continually arriving from other parts of Italy. But never for a moment did the ardent patriots cease to hope, to plot and labour for the redemption of the land. Men like *Fedele Lampertico*, the political economist and historian; *Mariano* and *Don Giuseppe Fogazzaro*; the sweet poet *Giacomo Zanella*; Count *Giovanni da Schio*, the famous archaeologist and distinguished author; *Valentino Pasini*, and countless others laboured quietly but ceaselessly and enthusiastically to keep alive the spirit of rebellion and prepare the people for the day they were determined should dawn at last.

In 1859 came the united efforts of Napoleon III

and Victor Emanuel. The city rang with the names of *Palestro*, *Solferino*, *San Martino* and *Magenta*; the old who had participated in the struggle of '48 held their breath in anxious and half-despairing suspense, while the young and ardent, drunk with the fumes of battle and the perfume of success, already saw the country delivered and her people free. Then came the crushing news of the peace of Villafranca, and servitude again for seven long years.

But at last, on the third of October, 1866, the peace of Vienna, the immediate result of the battle of Sadowa, that death-knell to Austrian greatness, brought rejoicing and thanksgiving to the long-tormented country, and it was with sentiments that defy description that Vicenza witnessed the departure of the oppressors, and saw the banner of freedom float proudly out upon the breeze from the great tower in the Piazza, while all the bells of the city crashed and clanged in triumph, and the joyous shout of *Viva l'Italia! Viva Vittorio Emanuele!* rose from thousands of jubilant hearts to thousands of exultant lips!

The following month brought a visit from the King, and, in the presence of a great multitude, the beloved monarch himself affixed the medal for military valour to the tattered standard of his faithful Vicenza—that standard in whose shadow so many gallant young lives had been willingly sacrificed at Montebello, and towards which the eager eyes of the wounded had turned with longing as they lay awaiting death on the bloody but glorious heights of Berico.

PART II

Part II.

CHAPTER I.

THE VICENTINE SCHOOL OF PAINTING.

THE Vicentine school of painting, so little known beyond the narrow limits of the province, is well worth consideration, and will amply repay the student's researches and the art-lover's attention.

Many of the works that once looked down from the walls of damp and gloomy churches have now been housed in the beautiful Palazzo Chiericati (Museo Civico), while others—some of the gems indeed—still occupy the very positions in which their authors placed them.

Vicenza had her artists in very early days. In the dawn of the fourteenth century, when Giotto was already learning to paint the soul, a certain *Battista*, called *da Vicenza*, was creating stiff, soulless, Byzantine Madonnas and saints on gorgeous gold backgrounds, much in the style of Cimabue, but without the breadth and majesty of manner that was never lacking even in the most primitive works of that master.

Battista was an honest and painstaking artist. His colours were carefully and conscientiously prepared ; his gold rich in quality and lavishly applied ; his rigid little personages drawn with the greatest precision—according, of course, to the dim lights of those early days—and duly draped and adorned with robes, crowns and mitres heavy with minutely executed embroideries

and close-set with flashing gems. His larger pictures, executed on wood, were invariably divided into many small compartments, each containing a saint, an episode in miniature, or a gorgeously bewinged angel. There are but few examples of Battista's work still extant, and we have no reason to believe that he ever attempted the broader and more difficult art of the fresco painter.

His successor, *Avanzi*, the first Vicentine to devote himself to the creation of frescoes, decorated a chapel in the Palazzo del Podestà with scenes from the life of San Vincenzo, in the year 1379, but all trace of his work, even the chapel itself, has long since disappeared.

Situated between two great art centres, Vicenza could not fail to feel the influence of both. During the second half of the fifteenth century Squarcione was working and teaching in Padua, and the Bellini were doing the same in Venice. Through his great pupil Mantegna, who was the master of *Bartolommeo Montagna*, Squarcione's classicism, his austerity of style inspired by a profound knowledge of Greek art, and his purity of taste in architecture and decoration, became the heritage of the Vicentine school. Through the second Montagna—*Benedetto*—the grace and tenderness, the spirituality and brilliancy of the Bellini passed to *Buonconsiglio*, who, according to many competent critics, was the crowning glory of the school of Vicenza. In later days came Paolo Veronese, whose genius amazed and inspired the Vicentine artists, and spurred them to more strenuous efforts, his influence being strongly apparent in many of the canvases that still look down in majestic dignity from the walls and ceilings of churches and palaces.

Francesco Squarcione belongs by right to Padua, but so important and far-reaching was his influence that a few words concerning him may not be superfluous.

A man of private fortune and of a strongly artistic temperament, he travelled largely, not only in Italy but also in Greece, sketching, copying, and purchasing many treasures which he eventually placed in his *bottega* in Padua, where the number of his scholars was larger than that of any other artist of his day. It is said that at one time one hundred and thirty-seven pupils were attending his lectures and receiving instruction from him. Squarcione, called by his contemporaries the "first among painters," was by no means a prolific artist, and taught rather by means of the models and drawings he had collected than by his own example. An enthusiastic admirer of the plastic art of ancient Greece—his collection boasted many fragments, many graceful heads and softly-moulded torsos—he inspired his pupils with a love of the statuesque, which is especially apparent in the style of his greatest scholar Mantegna.

Andrea Mantegna, born in Mantua or, according to some authorities, in Padua in the year 1513, was a great favourite with his master, who even adopted him as his son, and was lavish with his praise of Andrea's talents and youthful achievements. Mantegna, however, fell in love with and speedily wedded the beautiful daughter of Jacopo Bellini, the rival of the jealous and alas! ungenerous Squarcione, who was so enraged by this marriage that all his previous affection for Mantegna turned to bitter hatred, and he fell to violently blaming in him what he had hitherto extolled. "He can

do nought but reproduce statues," said the angry Francesco. "He has never learnt to paint flesh and blood—to portray the very soul!" Thus, in his wrath, did he condemn his own methods of instruction. The bitter and scathing criticism, however, proved salutary to Andrea, who began to study with greater respect and earnestness the works of sentimentalists such as the Bellini, and uniting his own strength and boldness of line and contour with their sweetness and depth of expression and conception, matured into the powerful draughtsman and realistic portraitist whose brush created the frescoes of the Gonzaga Palace at Mantua, where arresting heads of plain strong-featured men and women, winsome children in unconstrained attitudes, statuesque draperies, classic architecture, clever foreshortening and admirable perspective reveal the great master at his best.

At the feet of this master sat *Bartolommeo Montagna*, who lived for forty years, had his *bottega* and finally died in a house that stood upon the site now occupied by the Banca d'Italia, opposite the church of San Lorenzo.

In Bartolommeo's nature was a rare juxtaposition of the triumphant and the humble, of the bold and the tender. Endowed with a deep and true understanding of the human soul, he also possessed the power of conveying his understanding to others through the medium of his all-expressing brush, and as we stand before the majestic, triumphant Magdalen of Santa Corona, before the sorrowing adoring Mary of Monte Berico, or gaze into the glowing eyes of the Baptist in the Museo Civico, we are as conscious, as sure of the

artist's meaning, as if he himself stood beside us giving utterance to his painted thoughts.

In composition Bartolommeo conformed more or less to the taste of the period, displaying, however, a knowledge of the laws of perspective and foreshortening rare among his contemporaries. His colouring is soft and rich, his flesh tints natural and often glowing, his drawing careful, and his rendering of the nude strongly suggestive of the statuesque and of Mantegna. The use of gold and of gilding was fast going out of fashion in Montagna's day, but he still indulged largely in gold ornamentation and embroideries, often producing simply with the colours on his palette the effect of most brilliant gold.

Of *Benedetto Montagna*, Vasari, curiously enough, omits to speak. That he was, however, an artist of no mean talents is proved by the excellence of his works, several of which may still be studied in the Museo Civico. A pupil of the Bellini, he was nevertheless greatly influenced by Mantegna and by his brother (according to certain authorities, his father) Bartolommeo. The style of the Venetians is indeed more apparent in his pupil Giovanni Buonconsiglio than in Benedetto himself, whose touch was more harsh, whose conceptions were less spiritual, than might have been expected in the disciple of the Bellini, those painters of tender virgins and ethereal saints. When past middle life Benedetto took to engraving his own works, and his harsh and crude productions are much sought after and highly prized by collectors. Montagna died at Verona, where he is known to have been at work in 1530.

Giovanni Buonconsiglio, called *Il Marescalco*, but who must not be confounded with that other Marescalco, Pietro da Feltre, was the artist of the Vicentine school who most nearly approached the moderns. Stronger and broader than the Bellini in conception and more statuesque in attitude and drapery, his figures lack that naïve purity of expression and his compositions that simplicity of disposal and arrangement that are so charming in the canvases of the great Venetians. Modern thought—I had almost written modern scepticism—already stirred in the mind of this remote painter, of this seer of tragic or majestic visions. The "Madonna Enthroned" in the church of San Rocco has by many been pronounced the greatest art treasure of Vicenza. It is indeed superlatively artistic, very beautiful in colouring and in all ways a masterpiece, but it is also intensely modern in its lack of religiosity, in its realism and unconventionality. This unconventionality is less apparent in the disposal and detail of the canvas than in the expression and pose of the figures. The Raphaelesque Madonna is simply a very lovely woman with a charming baby seated upon a lofty throne, once a pagan altar; the three saints are simply pleasing and respectable elderly gentlemen, and the naked Sebastian with his inevitable arrows is simply a fine well-proportioned youth, conscious of his prominent and somewhat embarrassing position.

The *Deposizione* in the Museo Civico is a good example of Buonconsiglio's power of conceiving and creating tragic scenes, but how different is the effect it produces upon the mind of the beholder to that produced by Montagna's canvas representing the same subject in



Montagna

Photo Ed^{no}. Alinari

"THE MAGDALEN ENTHRONED"
(Church of Santa Corona)

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the Sanctuary of Berico ! The mourners—are they indeed the grief-stricken Mother and disciple, or only admirably-posed models, whose sorrow rests upon their features alone ? As to the Magdalen, she is one of the loveliest women painter's brush has ever portrayed, but, like the others, she utterly fails to convince the beholder that the great tragedy was real, intense and heart-breaking to Buonconsiglio, as it undoubtedly was to Montagna. In expressing this impression I am aware that it is not the feeling many excellent critics entertain towards Buonconsiglio, but my personal conviction is so strong that I believe I am justified in accepting its conclusion that this Vicentine was not endowed with the unquestioning faith and deep religiosity of the Bellini and of many of their school.

A painstaking elaborate painter was Giovanni, devoting much attention to detail, to background and surroundings, glorying in the rich and mellow tints of the Orient, and past-master in the laws of contrast and of value.

Speranza, *Verla*, *Fogolino* and *Tintorello* were very probably contemporaries of Buonconsiglio and of the Montagna, but the dates relating to them, as well indeed as to all the artists of the early days, are vague and inaccurate, and moreover very little beyond their name is known concerning them. *Fogolino*, *Verla*, and *Speranza* all received payment from the nuns of the church of San Domenico for work executed there, and in the convent between the years 1519 and 1526, and we know that *Tintorello* was a contemporary and disciple of Vittor Pisanello, who was teaching in the early fifteenth century. *Tintorello's* colouring did

indeed closely resemble that of Pisanello, but he was vastly inferior to him as a draughtsman.

In composition and colouring *Giovanni Speranza* drew very near to the early Umbrians. His frescoes—few, alas! have come down to us—are broad in handling and simple in arrangement. It is a great misfortune that the Crucifixion in the Refectory of the convent of San Domenico is fast fading away, but it nevertheless still conveys something of what its author's power must have been. In composition it is of the school of Perugino, and from it, as from those works of the mighty Umbrian representing the same subject, there emanates a sense of space, of atmosphere, and of deepest hush. After the noise and confusion of the Crucifixion, the hush of death has fallen upon the lofty hill-top, amid the adoring, heart-broken silence of the Marys and of the beloved disciple. What must have been the power and majesty of this work in the beginning which is still capable of suggesting so much through the few blurred lines and vague and fading figures that time and the ignorance of man have spared!

Of the art of *Alessandro Verla* or *Verlus*, as old Boschini calls him, few examples remain. That his style much resembled that of *Speranza* becomes evident when we examine and compare the angel by *Alessandro* on the left wall near the altar of the Magdalen in Santa Corona, the Madonna on the left of the main entrance, by many attributed to *Speranza*, and the saints, apostles and angels that look down from the walls of the second church of San Domenico. What part *Fogolino* had in the decoration of this church it

would be hard to decide, but there exists a record of payment made to him by the nuns in the year 1519. Judging by the four frescoes taken from the church of San Bartolommeo, and now preserved in the Museum and attributed to him, we incline to the belief that Marcello Fogolino's style as a painter of frescoes had much in common with that of Speranza and Verla. That these three adorned many walls in and about Vicenza with their creations cannot be doubted, and it is to be hoped that some of those that are still concealed beneath the plaster and whitewash of ignorance may once more be brought to light.

In his great picture the Adoration of the Magi, now in the Museum, Marcello shows himself in another and more astonishing light. Here he "emerges as something entirely foreign to the Vicentine school . . . his style is unique . . . there is nothing like it in Venice or anywhere else," says Lanzi, who believes him to have been a contemporary or perhaps a predecessor of Giam Bellini, who died in 1501. The fallacy of this supposition is, however, satisfactorily demonstrated by the records of payments made to him by the nuns of San Domenico. Some of his figures are Raphaelesque and dignified, while others savour of Mantegna in manner and pose. His fancy was whimsical and lively, his knowledge of perspective and power of rendering architecture, astonishing.

The artists of the third period were numerous and prolific, but it is difficult, given the vagueness of the dates, to draw the line that separates them from the earlier masters.

Girolamo dal Toso, who worked during the first half

of the sixteenth century, has left proof of his skill on the walls of the chapel of St. Catherine in the Cathedral. His contemporary and friend was *Giambattista Maganza*, the father of Alessandro, to whom the school of Vicenza owes so much.

The name of Maganza is met with in every church, every palace and in the annals of the *Accademia Olimpica*. The family is believed to have come originally from Mayence on the Rhine, hence the name Maganza. The father of our Giambattista removed from Este to Vicenza in or about the year 1510, and became constable, or guardian of one of the city gates. Giambattista was born some time between 1510 and 1513, probably in Vicenza, although in his writings he is fond of calling himself a Paduan. In Venice he studied painting under Titian, whose influence is apparent in his works, few of which have been preserved. One or two portraits in the Museum show him in the light of a clever and faithful portraitist. But poetry was Giambattista's hobby, and for the pen he neglected the brush. Always needy, always gay, always generous, tender and kind to man and beast, he could not fail to be a general favourite. His friends were many, and Giambattista never hesitated to appeal to their generosity, as he also never omitted to acknowledge their kindness in rustic verse or flowery prose. At Christmas he writes to one of his benefactors: "Thanks for your gift (of money). I am hoping to be able to collect enough, without too greatly inconveniencing my friends, to purchase a winter cloak!"

The custom of composing so-called rustic verse was much in vogue at this time. All classes and both

sexes gave much time to the study of the Paduan or some other Venetian dialect, and, feigning to be rough unlettered peasants, rhymed away on all sorts of subjects. The greatest poet of this school was Ruzante of Padua, while Father Agostino Rapa of Vicenza and the tailor Bartolommeo Rustichello, who turned Petrarch's sonnets and whole cantos of Ariosto into dialect, were friends and fellow-rhymsters of Maganza.

The intimate and protégé of Gian Giacomo Trissino, Giambattista could not fail to imbibe much knowledge of the classics, and his verse teems with mythological and classical allusions, while not infrequently we find passages from the Latin poets as well as from Dante, Petrarch, Tasso and Ariosto done into dialect.

A model husband to his wife Thia, and the devoted father of many children, he nevertheless dedicated page after page and sonnet after sonnet to the beauteous Viga (Lodovica), of whom he would appear to have been madly enamoured.

Many of his children died in infancy, and Giambattista was well advanced in years when Alessandro, whom he affectionately called his *Sandron*, was born to him. To Sandron he left a rich heritage of debts, which the son resignedly accepted, saying that his father had contracted them in helping others worse off than himself.

At Cricoli, the residence of the great Trissino, Giambattista was an ever-welcome guest, and in 1544 he went to Rome in the train of that other warrior-poet Marco Thiene, and in the company of Palladio, whose intimate he was. The two years spent in the eternal city, surrounded by luxury and by all that appealed

most warmly to his artistic and poetic temperament, must have been the happiest of Maganza's long life, and great and lasting was his gratitude to the noble patron who had made this journey possible.

He was a frequent and welcome visitor at many villas and palaces throughout the province, and often journeyed as far as Bassano, Este or Padua, where he painted numerous portraits and several altar-pieces.

A member of the Accademia Olimpica, he was allowed to take up a collection in his own favour whenever a banquet was given or a meeting held, and he would appear to have experienced no shame in accepting this benefit. Generous himself, he took it for granted that by providing the occasion for generosity in others he was also procuring for them the exquisite pleasure he himself would have experienced under similar conditions. Witty, animated and cultured, his conversation lent charm and brilliancy to the sessions of the Accademia, and being a most excellent elocutionist, he was often called upon to read the papers of absent or timid members. He took an active part in the staging of plays at a small theatre (not the Olimpico) which Palladio had recently constructed, and with him and Girolamo dal Toso repeatedly prepared and organized the decorations of the city when distinguished guests were to be entertained. A merry life and an easy one was Giambattista's, but whether Madonna Thia, who was responsible for the dinners and suppers of a large family, approved of the conduct of her jovial spouse is not recorded.

Upon Maganza's death, which took place in 1586, the Accademia gave him a grand funeral, all the members

following in solemn procession to the grave, and a fellow-rhymster wrote his epitaph as follows—

Morto el Maganza sol per stare in ozio.

Pianzi pittura, pianzi poesia.

Radoppia el pianto ti poltroneria

Che no te avrà mai più sì fido sozio !¹

Giambattista was a contemporary of *Paolo Veronese*, who died two years after the merry poet, and who was already painting his masterpieces and forming disciples at the time of *Alessandro's* birth.

In 1553 Paolo with his faithful friend and disciple Giambattista Zelotti of Verona was decorating the splendid villa at Fanzuolo near Treviso which Palladio had recently constructed for Leonardo Emo. It was here that the lad *Antonio Fasolo*, engaged to carry mortar and stones for the masons and presently promoted to the position of colour-mixer and errand-boy to the painters, received his inspiration from Paolo, and determined to study that master's art. The work at Fanzuolo successfully and gloriously accomplished, Paolo and Zelotti parted company, Zelotti coming to Vicenza to decorate the façade of the Monte di Pietà. Antonio, who naturally stood less in awe of this painter than of the already famous Paolo, probably received much instruction from him during the days at Fanzuolo, but he now followed after Paolo, who accepted him as his pupil. Thus it happened that Fasolo became through Zelotti a disciple and imitator of the Veronese.

¹ " Maganza is dead, being too lazy to go on living. Weep Painting, weep Poetry, but weep thou most of all, O Indolence, for never more wilt thou find a disciple so faithful ! "

Giambattista Zelotti, although a Veronese by birth, worked much and skilfully in and about Vicenza, and often upon one and the same wall with his beloved Paolo, of whose superiority and wide-spread fame he came in time, however, to be bitterly jealous. Thus, meeting him one day on the Piazza in Vicenza, and failing to control his envious and resentful feelings, he first assailed him with injurious language and presently attacked him with heavy blows. For this offence Zelotti was ordered to leave the city and to remain without her walls until Paolo should have departed. The frescoes of the Monte have long since disappeared, but the two canvases in the Duomo, that in San Pietro, and the beautiful Finding of the Cross in San Rocco, still bear witness to the genius of Zelotti. His knowledge of architecture and his sense of decoration were great, and his taste and power in the use of colour revealed the influence and teachings of the immortal Paul.

Gian Antonio Fasolo, who unfortunately died young, established himself in Vicenza, where his *bottega* was frequented by many scholars. He decorated the walls and façades of many sumptuous villas and palaces throughout the province, and it was while painting in the great hall of the Palazzo del Podestà (1572) that Fasolo met his death by a fall from the lofty scaffolding. Good-tempered and unassuming, he was a general favourite with his associates at the Accademia Olimpica, of which he was a member.

Too indolent or perhaps too distrustful of his own abilities to instruct his son, Giambattista Maganza sent *Alessandro* to Fasolo's *bottega*, where the great

talents with which nature had endowed him were speedily developed. In composition and disposal he far surpassed his father, whom he never equalled, however, as a colourist. Giambattista's talent for portraiture he would appear to have inherited, and the influence of Titian and Tintoretto, who were both working so near him, is revealed in the pose and handling of many of his figures. Alessandro, blessed like his father with a numerous family, and like him also always out at elbows, had none of the elder Maganza's indolence, and although the taste for poetry was strong within him, he never allowed this passion to interfere with the more serious occupations of life. As an artist he was indeed too prolific, and many of the shortcomings in his canvases may be attributed to the fact that *Sandron* not only painted "for a living," but also that he allowed his numerous progeny, all of whom had more or less talent, to paint many of his pictures, he himself sketching in the figures and adding the finishing touches. His beautiful golden skies and luminous backgrounds are all his own—only Correggio, perhaps, has equalled and surpassed Maganza in the splendour of his skies and in depicting the very glow of Paradise. That he was highly cultured we may conclude from the knowledge of antiquity he displays in many of his canvases, and also from the fact that, like his father, he was a member of the *Accademia Olimpica*.

Tradition tells us that Alessandro was bereaved of wife, children and grandchildren by the pestilence that smote Vicenza in the year 1630. His great-grandson Girolamo alone survived, and from him are descended the Maganzas who still live in Vicenza. The aged

artist soon followed his loved ones to the grave, and is supposed to have been buried in the church of San Pietro.

His son, Giambattista junior, died at the age of forty, some twelve or fifteen years before his father. Had he lived he would undoubtedly have become a great artist and a worthy successor of Alessandro. His works in the Oratorio del Duomo reveal him in the light of a painstaking if not always accurate draughtsman, and although his figures are not infrequently ill disposed and his composition is sometimes confused and faulty, he nevertheless exhibits a keen and refined sense of beauty, and great taste in the arrangement and handling of drapery. As a colourist he was far inferior to his father.

Another excellent master of the Vicentine school was *Antonio Vicentino*, called *Tognone*, a corruption of his Christian name. Like Fasolo, he, as a lad, carried mortar and stones for the masons, and it came to pass that he was thus occupied when Zelotti, was decorating the façade of the Monte. Many were the angry words and heavy blows he received from the masons because he often neglected his work to gaze and gape at the marvels which the painter's brush was creating, until at last one day the good-natured Zelotti, becoming conscious of the poor lad's interest and admiration, offered to teach him drawing and composition. Overjoyed at this unexpected opportunity for developing the talent he felt he possessed, Antonio became Zelotti's devoted slave and eager pupil, and for years followed his master from place to place, working with him and for him, gladly and humbly merging his own identity



Giovanni Bellini

" THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST "

(Church of Santa Corona)

in that of the artist to whom he owed so much. At last, however, we find him alone in Vicenza, covering the Cà d'Oro on the Corso with frescoes so excellent as to lead Palma Vecchio to declare that had not fate so soon severed the thread of Antonio's life he must surely have come to rival the greatest masters of his art.

But Tognone, never satisfied with his own achievements and ever inclined to underrate his talents, was subject to moments of terrible depression. It was at such a time that he flung aside the brush and enlisted as a soldier. The rough life was but ill adapted to the delicately-organized temperament of the artist, and he soon fell into a decline and died.

Andrea Vicentino (1539-1614) was a diligent student of the works and manner of Titian and Tintoretto. Strong in colouring, a master in composition, and possessed of a profound knowledge of the laws of perspective and of relative values, Andrea has left several fine examples of his genius in the Oratorio del Duomo, but he is best studied in Venice, where many of his canvases look down from the walls of the Ducal Palace. The Battle of Lepanto in the Sala dello Scrutinio, is so excellent in composition, its colour-scheme so rich in deep toned and mellow tints, its figures so powerfully and admirably executed, as to "deceive even the ablest critics, and induce them to attribute it to Tintoretto himself" (Boschini). That Andrea had the honour of working where Titian, Palma Vecchio and Tintoretto were proud to place their canvases is proof sufficient of the high esteem in which he was held by his contemporaries.

Francesco Maffei, who died in 1660, studied under Peranda, himself a favourite pupil of Palma Vecchio. Maffei later became a student of the works of Paolo Veronese and of Tintoretto, and excelled as a portraitist, for in all of his pictures the heads are undoubtedly portraits. His figures are majestic, well posed and lifelike, and the flow of his usually dark and heavy draperies is effective and graceful in the extreme. His handling of light and shade is admirable, and few have surpassed him in the composition of solemn and impressive scenes. Maffei unfortunately was not careful in the preparation of his colours, and many of his best works have blackened to such an extent as to have become almost valueless.

As an example of a curious combination of professions, I must mention a scholar of Maffei, who lived and worked in Vicenza in the late seventeenth century. This was *Giovanni Bittonte*, artist and—dancing master, known as *Il Ballerino*.

After the great leaders in Vicentine art came a host of imitators and followers of more or less merit, until the school as such entirely ceased to exist, and became merged in the overwhelming wave of the Barocco, with its distortions and artificialities that so successfully annihilated the true artistic sense, and provoked the deplorable whitewashings of the late seventeenth and of the eighteenth centuries, and the irritating canvases of the period of decadence.

CHAPTER II

PALLADIO, TEATRO OLIMPICO AND THE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE.

TO the poet, orator and amateur architect *Giangiorgio Trissino* Vicenza owes Palladio, for it was Giangiorgio who discovered the lad's talents and made it possible for him to cultivate them. It all came about in this wise.

Trissino, student and imitator of Greek and Roman poetry, and an ardent admirer of the majesty and grandeur in all things of the ancients, was weary of the fussy and elaborate architectonic creations which the late and distorted Gothic was producing in his generation. Familiar with the works of Vitruvius which the Veronese Fra Giocondo had recently translated and arranged, Trissino in 1530 set about remodelling, in the spirit of the ancients, one of his country houses, that stood just beyond the city gates. Giangiorgio in person superintended the execution of the plans he himself had drawn, and seated in the shade of a spreading chestnut beside the little lake that in those days glistened at the foot of his garden amidst the green of surrounding fields, he meditated upon some passage of his *Sophonisba*, and watched the busy labourers, beneath whose hands the classic villa of *Cricoli* was fast coming into being. Back and forth from the lake to the villa went a bashful lad of some twelve years of age, carrying heavy copper vessels full of water, for

mixing the mortar, and always carefully avoiding the neighbourhood of the (to him) awe-inspiring though still youthful poet. One day, between two journeys, Giangiorgio saw the boy pause before a freshly plastered space upon the villa's outer wall, and producing a bit of charcoal from his ragged pocket, proceed to draw certain figures upon its temptingly smooth surface. Upon examination these figures resolved themselves into the clever plan of a wonderful winding stairway, such a stairway as Giangiorgio himself had long been trying to create. Who and what was this marvellous boy? Only *Andrea*, son of Pietro, and a simple mason's drudge, born in Vicenza in 1518 of a father whose trade is unknown to us, and who boasted no family name.

His tongue loosened and his timidity overcome by encouraging and kindly words from the great poet, Andrea told of his aspirations to become a master-builder, at the same time unconsciously revealing the classic intuitions and predilections with which nature herself must have endowed him. For unable to read, and surrounded by ignorance and poverty, there was certainly no one in his narrow world who could have instilled into his youthful mind such lofty thoughts and high ideals as he expressed little by little to his gracious patron. In this poor lad Giangiorgio had found a kindred spirit. He immediately took him under his protection, and delighted in imparting to him his own broad knowledge of architecture, and inspiring him with his own ideals and conceptions. Later on the wealthy nobleman made it possible for the promising young architect to spend much time

in Rome, where he studied the glorious monuments of classic days, forming his own style upon models left by the ancients.

Giangiorgio Trissino it was who decreed that the boy Andrea should be called *Palladio*, in flattering allusion to Pallas of old. As a little lad, revelling in that freedom from supervision that is the great prerogative of the children of the poor, Andrea undoubtedly spent many happy hours playing amongst the ruins of the Roman theatre of Vicenza, unconsciously cultivating that taste for purity of line and breadth of proportion that was to make him one day the "prince of architects."

The boy's native town already afforded many fine examples of the builder's art. *Tommaso Formenton*, who from a simple carpenter had risen to be one of the leading architects of his day, had built his lovely loggia in the courtyard of the episcopal palace some five-and-twenty years before Andrea's birth, and, like Giangiorgio Trissino, other nobles were devoting much time and attention to the study of architecture, many of these amateurs earning words of praise from Palladio himself in his numerous writings on his art. The mysterious *Giovanni*, said to have been Andrea's master, was working in those early days as a simple stonemason and sculptor in stucco and wood, but notwithstanding his humble station, he certainly enjoyed the esteem and high consideration of his contemporaries, for we are told that it was through his influence that the designs for the new Basilica, presented by the youthful Palladio, came to be accepted by the civic authorities.

The fruit of Andrea's first visit to Rome was a treatise on the antiquities of that city, which, however, was not published until 1554. Familiarity with their ruined monuments inspired him with a desire to know more of the private life and customs of the Romans, and he therefore devoted much time to the study of ancient history and classical literature. As a consequence, his little book was rather an historical sketch than a work on architecture. He studied Vitruvius deeply and respectfully, but differed from him on several essential points, for he justly held that different conditions and epochs most of necessity modify the laws of architecture as of everything else. He nevertheless declares in the introduction to his great work on the art of building, that he early chose the architect of Augustus as his guide and master.

It was in the train of *Marco Thiene*, poet, artist and soldier, and nephew of that *Luigi da Porto*, author of *Romeo and Juliet*, that *Palladio* and *Giambattista Maganza* journeyed to Rome in 1544, this probably being Andrea's second visit to that city. *Bramante*, the leading architect of his day, had recently passed away, but *Michaelangelo* was still living, and although already advanced in years, had not as yet begun his labours at St. Peter's. *Sangallo* was at that time superintending the work upon the great basilica, and we can fancy with what eager interest Andrea watched and studied the progress of the edifice. It is hardly to be supposed that the Vicentine failed to meet and converse with both Michaelangelo and Sangallo, but unfortunately no record of their intercourse has reached us. Zanella expresses the opinion that Pal-

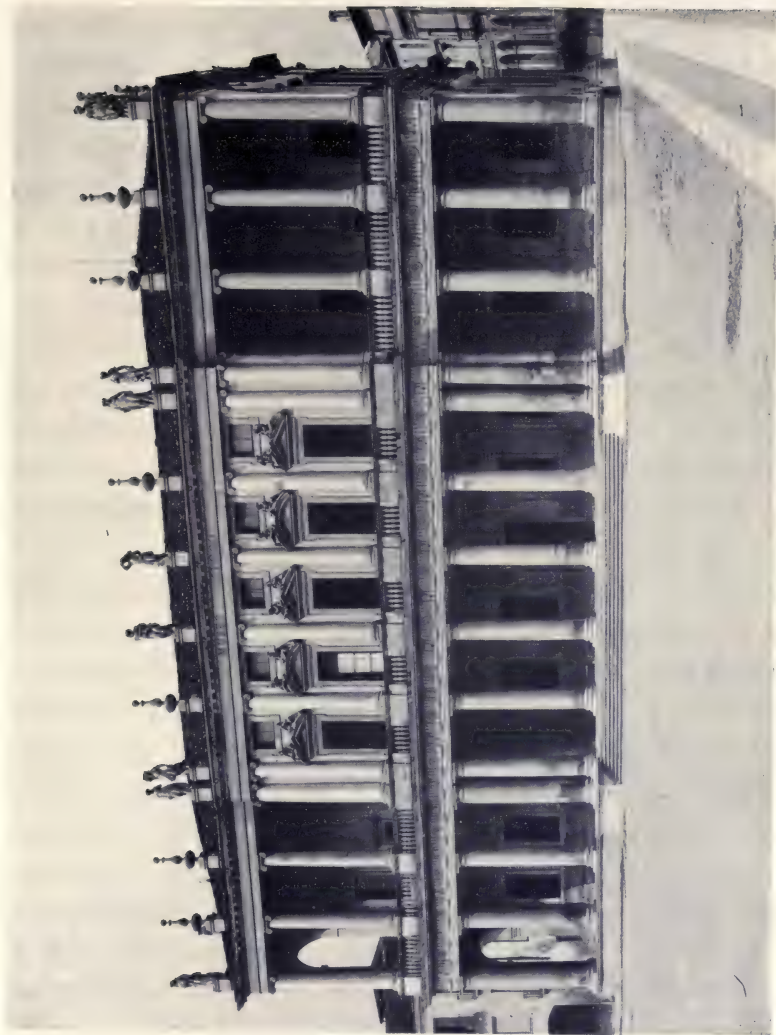


Photo Edg. Alinari

PALAZZO CHIERICATI—NOW THE CITY MUSEUM

ladio “ could not always have approved of Michael-angelo’s audacity, which prepared the way for the insane innovations of Bernini and of Borromini. . . . Neither could he have failed to censure Sangallo for his theft of stones from the Colosseum and the theatre of Marcellus, to provide material for the foundations and sumptuous atrio of the Palazzo Farnese.”

During the year following the memorable Roman journey, Andrea presented to the civic authorities his project for the Basilica of Vicenza. Three years later his plans were accepted and approved, and the labour that was to endure until the day of his death was begun with ardour and rejoicing. Of this greatest glory of Palladio and of his native city we have spoken at length elsewhere ; suffice it to repeat here what the master himself said of it in the third volume of his work on architecture, published in 1570. “ A basilica there is in Vicenza for which I drew the plans, the porticoes that surround it being entirely of my own invention ; and I doubt not that this edifice may bear comparison with the monuments of antiquity, and may be enrolled amongst the greatest and most beautiful constructions that have been raised from the time of the ancients to the present day ; and this, not only because of its size and decorations, but also because of the excellence of the materials that compose it, as it is built entirely of hardest living stones, laid and bound together with the utmost precision.”

Andrea was proud of his well-accomplished task, and honestly free to praise what he knew was praiseworthy.

Of Giangiorgio Trissino and Cricoli, where he called

about him the greatest minds of his time, and where Palladio was ever a welcome guest, I have already spoken. Other Vicentine noblemen, the *Gualdi* foremost among them, held their courts of learning, at which questions and problems pertaining to art, literature and science were wisely and deeply discussed. The love of dramatic and spectacular performances has always been ardent in the hearts of the Vicentines of all classes, and many were the tragedies, comedies and religious dramas enacted in the halls or courtyards of private palaces before the Olympic Academy was founded in 1556, when all pre-existing literary, artistic and scientific associations were merged into one great body.

Learning had long been cultivated and appreciated in the city by the Bacchiglione. As early as the year 823 there existed here a so-called public *studio* founded by Berengarius, and Petrarch in his day had much to say in praise of Vicenza's culture. In the fifteenth century *Loschi* wrote his *Achilles*, which came as a forerunner to Trissino's *Sophonisba*. *Luigi da Porto* was one of the earliest novelists, and his tales were such as to inspire Shakespeare. Nor were her women unworthy of the highly cultured city. Among many other distinguished ladies, *Maddalena Campiglia* was a leader. Not only was she a sweet singer in well-measured verse, but a woman whose wit and intellect commanded the attention and admiration of the leading men of letters of her day, while her gentle unassuming manner charmed all who came in contact with her. Science could boast of *Pigafetta* the geographer, while art in all her branches was

gloriously represented. The Olympic Academy was the outcome of much erudition and love of the beautiful. Princes, popes, foreign ambassadors, scientists, artists and poets of many lands were all proud to accept the honorary membership of the new Academy, and were lavish in their grants and donations.

Among the one-and-twenty founders of the Olympic was Palladio, who was soon called upon to erect a temporary theatre in the courtyard of Elio Belli's splendid palace, for the performance of the *Andria* of Terence. Fasolo painted the scenery and decorated the stage, while Rubini—a sculptor of renown in those days—provided a quantity of wooden statues. In 1861 Andrea built a stage in the great hall of the Basilica for the representation of Giangiorgio's *Sophonisba*, which Voltaire pronounced the first tragic work of merit that had been produced in Europe. The fame of the beautiful stage and of the great drama spread far and wide, and the names of Trissino and Palladio were in the mouths of the cultured of all countries.

Eighteen years later the Academy decided to erect a permanent theatre, and Palladio was commissioned to draw the plans. Thus the famous *Teatro Olimpico* came into being, which still forms one of the principal features of interest of the ancient city. A grant was easily obtained of the site of the then ruined castle or fortress of Vicenza. Sixty members of the Academy contributed each not less than forty gold ducats, and Andrea had the satisfaction of seeing the roof placed upon the edifice before his death, which occurred within a year of the founding of the theatre. Scamozzi was then appointed to continue the work, and Silla,

Palladio's son, was made treasurer and general manager.

The Olimpico is a faithful reproduction of the typical Roman theatre, the only deviation from the rules of theatre building of the ancients being in its shape, which is slightly elliptical instead of being a perfect circle. This variant was necessitated by the size of the space placed at the architect's disposal. Palladio designed the decorations both of the stage and of the upper colonnade, decorations which are chaste and effective and devoid of that excess of elaboration that too often distinguishes the productions of the master's immediate successors. The bas-reliefs above the stage represent the labours of Hercules, founder of the Olympic Games. The statues—ninety-five in number—represent distinguished Academicians in the garb of Romans; a graceful colonnade encircles the theatre above the tiers of seats that accommodate more than fourteen thousand spectators; and thirteen lofty windows behind this colonnade admit light to the spacious interior. A billowing *velarium* of palest blue forms the ceiling, and, as in the theatres of the ancients, the space for the musicians is sunk between the stage and the lowest tier of seats. The fixed scenery, arranged as in Roman days, was designed by Scamozzi and is a triumph of perspective and foreshortening. This architect also built the rooms and halls that surround the theatre, forming to this day the head-quarters of the Olympic Academy.

In 1585 Sophocles' *Oedipus* was represented in the new theatre. We are told that all the leading actors and *litterati* of the day took part in the performance; that the costumes were designed by Maganza him-

self; that the most skilful engineers were summoned to manage the lighting of the building—a difficult and dangerous problem. More than two thousand of Italy's greatest nobles assembled at Vicenza on this occasion, all finding shelter within the hospitable palaces of the local aristocracy. The performance, which lasted four hours, was followed by a splendid ball given by five hundred gentlewomen of Vicenza. On the morrow a great banquet took place in the hall of the Basilica, to which all the most distinguished foreigners were invited, and at which it was decided to repeat the performance of *Oedipus*. On the morning of the day of the second representation, the Academicians, together with the actors, attended solemn high mass in the church of San Rocco. Curious ceremonial, curious mingling of things sacred and profane, of the pagan and the Christian!

Since those far-away days many of Italy's most famous actors have stood upon the stage of the classic theatre, while the world's greatest princes and poets have witnessed with delight their rendering of tragedy or comedy, and assisted with deepest interest at the debates of the learned Academy. Thus Goethe, having taken part in an assembly of Academicians in 1786, afterwards witnessed a performance in the famous theatre. In 1807 Napoleon exclaimed on entering: "Mais nous sommes en Grèce!" thereby indeed adequately expressing his appreciation, but at the same time, alas, displaying a sad unfamiliarity with the marked difference that exists between the architecture of the Greeks and that of the Romans.

In 1847 Gustavo Modena acted *Oedipus* in the Teatro

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Olimpico, this being the last evening performance, for it was then decided that candles and oil lamps constitute a serious danger in a theatre whose decorations consist largely of wood. Later on Rossi and the elder Salvini trod the classic boards, and recently Salvini the younger has on several occasions declaimed there the immortal stanzas of Sophocles and Euripides. I myself have had the pleasure of hearing him in *Hippolytus*, and the illusion was complete. Theseus and his queen, the virtuous prince Hippolytus and his band of followers, the faithful nurse and the wise and aged citizen of Troezen, all wept, rejoiced or raged in truly classic fashion. Diana and Venus loomed behind filmy clouds and prophesied in awe-inspiring tones; incense shed its perfume before the statues of the gods; the silver horns sounded deep and ringing notes as the huntsmen bore the fruit of the chase to the Temple of Diana, and the mourners with dishevelled locks rent their garments and chanted their mournful dirge around the bier of the lovely but perfidious Phaedra. So powerful is the composition, so excellent was the acting and so correct the staging that despite the gulf of time and of conditions that yawns between that remote epoch and ours, the tragedy was real, the story moving, and the sense of calamity and misery oppressive.

* * * * *

Down to the very day of his death Palladio's activity was great. Although ever watchful of the work upon the Basilica, he nevertheless found time to plan and erect churches, villas, bridges and palaces, to travel from city to city building or designing, and

to compose that wonderful work on architecture, which, together with his *Commentaries* on Cæsar, has proved him a student and writer fit to be enrolled among the classics. The introduction of gunpowder had completely revolutionized the pre-existing methods of warfare, and many at that time were studying the art of war in its new aspect. Palladio, encouraged by Trissino, attempted to demonstrate that, not only were many of Cæsar's methods still applicable, but also eminently superior to the tactics that had been recently proposed. His work was held in high esteem by many of his contemporaries, and in later days was studied and praised by no less a general than Frederick the Great himself. Palladio's style in letters, as in architecture, is direct, clear and polished.

The governors whom Venice sent to rule Vicenza carried the fame of the great builder to the city of the lagoons, and many are the edifices there that were erected from Palladio's designs. The Convento della Carità (now Accademia) owes to him the still living glory of its courtyard and loggia. The church of San Giorgio Maggiore that smiles across the sparkling Grand Canal upon the busy, glowing city, and the temple of the Redentore on distant Giudecca, where Byron loved to muse and dream, are monuments to the genius of the immortal Andrea. The following short extract from his writings ably and quaintly illustrates the sentiments he entertained concerning church architecture: "Therefore, as men in the building of their houses, use the greatest care to procure the best and most skilful of architects and clever artisans in sufficient number, so are they even more

firmly bound to exercise every care in the building of churches ; and if in those (their houses) they strive principally to obtain comfort, so in these (the churches) they must strive principally to create a dignity and grandeur of form worthy of Him whom they propose to invoke and adore therein. He being the highest Good and the greatest Perfection, it is most fitting that all things dedicated to Him should be as perfect in every way as man can make them. And indeed when we consider this beautiful construction, the world, so full of marvellous ornaments, when we consider how the ever-turning heavens change its seasons according to its natural needs, preserving themselves in their positions through the sweet harmony of their gentle movements, we cannot deny that, as the small temples of our building must in a measure resemble this immense temple of His infinite bounty, which was called into perfect being by one mighty word, we are bound to lavish upon them all those adornments which it lies in our power to procure, and to create them in such proportions that all their parts mingling, may greet the eye of the beholder with sweetest harmony, while each separately serves its own purpose most worthily."

Of Palladio's works in Vicenza I have spoken at length elsewhere. Throughout the province there exist charming villas which he designed for wealthy patricians, many of them embellished by the brush of Paolo Veronese or of Fasolo. For his devoted friends the Barbaro brothers of Venice he built a sumptuous villa at Maser, and is by many supposed to have died there, for the little temple that adjoins the villa bears the

date 1580, which was the year of Andrea's death. He is also believed to have left many of his drawings to his two beloved friends, for in 1730 Lord Burlington published in London a book of designs and plans by Palladio, which he declared he had discovered during a visit at Maser. The originals are now preserved at Chiswick, and in 1845 the Duke of Devonshire sent a full list of them to the Accademia Olimpica. It is estimated that at least two hundred and fifty of these are by Palladio's own hand.

Of Andrea's private life but few details have come down to us. He certainly did not live in the house on the Corso now pointed out as his, but in Borgo Santa Lucia, somewhere near the palace of Count Angaran, for we hear of his presence there in a neighbourly way on several occasions. His name figures as witness at the marriage of one of Angaran's daughters, and his son Silla witnessed the old Count's will in the year 1593. These were offices which in those days were usually performed by near neighbours.

Andrea mentions his wife in terms of the greatest affection in several letters, but fails to state her maiden name. We know, however, that she bore him three sons and a daughter, Zenobia, of whom he was extremely fond. His numerous family and that improvidence peculiar to the artistic temperament kept him ever in want of money, and as the receipts still exist for all sums paid to him for work on the Basilica, we find that he often, at his own request, received weekly and even daily payments; that when contemplating a journey he was frequently forced to ask for an advance, and that during his absence, his wife and children

were sometimes driven to appeal to the director of works for small sums, to be deducted from Andrea's fixed salary. The following entry in the account-book of one of the Valmaranas speaks volumes: "On the thirtieth of August, 1550, said Palladio had from me, in order that he might get his last infant baptised, *troni* 0, *marchetti* 12. The *marchetto* was worth something like five centimes. Baptism was certainly cheap in those days, but really Count Valmarana might have made his gift a *trono*, which would have purchased a flask of good wine to drink the infant's health in! Perhaps this baby was Zenobia, who married a certain Giovanni Battista, a jeweller, who, like her father, boasted no family name, but who came to be known as Dalla Fede, from the sign—two hands clasped—that hung above the door of his shop.

Zenobia's dower consisted of four hundred ducats; her trousseau contained "plenty of aprons of black or crimson silk or lawn, several linen shifts and some finely embroidered white caps." By the marriage contract her father bound himself to pay two hundred ducats within a month of the ceremony, and the rest in quarterly rates of five-and-twenty ducats each. The amount paid immediately after the wedding represented Palladio's salary for seventeen months labour at the Basilica. Zenobia had one daughter, but the family of the great artist became extinct within a century of his death.

One of his sons, Marcantonio, was a sculptor and wood-carver, and worked on the Basilica; another was an architect, but died young; Silla seems to have



Tiepolo

"THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION"

Photo Ed^{ne}. Alinari

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had a clear head and a turn for administration, and things went more smoothly with the family after he assumed the direction of affairs. Two years before his father's death Silla purchased a burial-place in the church of Santa Corona, where Andrea and many of his family rested until the year 1845, when his bones were removed to the cemetery and placed in the chapel which Count Girolamo Egidio Velo of Vicenza had caused to be erected there in his honour. Count Velo had brought from the Baths of Caracalla many fragments and some broken columns of rare and precious marbles with which he caused the chapel to be adorned. Thus Palladio now rests surrounded by remains of that majestic edifice amongst whose ruins he so often mused and studied in his ardent and youthful enthusiasm for the monuments of ancient Rome.

Writing thirty years after his death, Paolo Gualdo describes Andrea as small of stature, with a fine presence and a most jovial expression of countenance. We are told that his conversation was brilliant and clever; that he was beloved by rich and poor, and that his unvarying good-nature and great flow of spirits made him a favourite with his workmen, who were ever ready to do their best for *Mistro* Andrea. Always willing to instruct and direct, he left many disciples and scholars, especially in Vicenza.

Palladio has been accused of sacrificing everything, even comfort itself, to appearance and the application of his own ideals. Thus in his palaces the splendid columns soaring upwards to the height of two stories, mean one lofty and spacious hall, while below and above the apartments are low and small. He did indeed

sacrifice much of what to-day is comfort, to fine façades and graceful loggias, but we must bear in mind that modes of life were different in those days; that the family assembled both for food and conversation in the one great hall, where it was always cool in summer and warm in winter—if one kept near enough to the great fires that blazed in the wonderfully-sculptured fireplaces. There was no question then of madam's "boudoir" or of the master's "den," and as for libraries, few families possessed books enough to cover a good-sized table. Palladio built for his times, and if modern Vicentines find his palaces inconvenient, it is certainly not his fault.

Nor can he be held responsible if much of the ornamentation of his palaces appears to us vulgar and ostentatious. In his day architecture, painting and sculpture no longer found expression through one and the same hand. Palladio could neither carve nor paint—he must avail himself of the skill of a "Bombardino" for those heavy, puffy, self-conscious, smirking cherubs that hover in mid-air with one leg at an impossible angle, supporting garlands that appear to weigh tons, or shields swathed in massive leaden draperies. He must bow to the superior skill of a "Bombardino" or some other equally fatuous creator of monstrosities, who probably despised him for his incapacity with chisel and brush, and he must also tolerate the poor conceptions and weak execution of the artist of the hour, allowing him to deface his splendid walls with vulgar, highly-coloured frescoes. The taste of the times, fast becoming corrupt, demanded this sacrifice. The Barocco, moreover, was advancing

with giant strides; simplicity, truth and purity of line were fast becoming traditions of the past in architecture no less than in every other branch of art, and we owe it to Andrea Palladio that the Renaissance produced, for a time at least, works of rare beauty and true elegance, and was long preserved from degenerating—as it did at last—into the odious Barocco.

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Palladio was surrounded in Vicenza by a group of clever artisans and skilful engineers, who, recognizing his vast superiority, gladly accepted his counsels and willingly and conscientiously executed his commands.

Of *Mistro Giovanni*, who was supposedly Andrea's master and became his devoted disciple, and of *Giro-lamo Pironi*, who was the author of many statues that grace the Basilica, little is known. *Barnaba Proto*, or the "foreman," trained to his work by Palladio, together with the master-masons *Natale Baragia* and *Giovanni Grazioli*—disciples these also, and ardent admirers of the great architect—were the authors of the façade of the Palazzo del Podestà (now the court-house) that has been by many falsely attributed to Scamozzi. Grazioli and another clever stone-cutter, *Angelo Benetello*, built the graceful stair that leads to the loggia of the Basilica, and we have knowledge of the "*sons of Guglielmo*," carpenters, stone-masons and architects, who were employed both by Palladio and Scamozzi.

Camillo Mariani, whose epitaph in the church of Santa Susanna in Rome, where he died in 1611, proclaims him both sculptor and architect, was a native

of Vicenza. He was a favourite of the Popes Clement VIII and Paul V, for both of whom he worked, and the statues that still adorn the façade of San Pietro in Vicenza are examples of his skill.

Paolo da Ponte became one of the first architects of the Venetian Republic, and was employed in the work of restoring both the Ducal Palace and the Ponte di Rialto.

Another contemporary of the "prince of architects" was *Giandomenico Scamozzi*, builder and mathematician, and father of the great Vincenzo. From a simple carpenter he rose to the rank of a distinguished architect, and was the designer of many villas and palaces in and about Vicenza. He travelled far and wide, built the royal palace and the fortress of Warsaw, and observed the architecture of many countries. He himself directed his son's earliest studies, and probably inspired him with that feeling of jealous enmity and bitter rivalry with which Vincenzo ever regarded the greater Palladio. "But," says the sententious Milizia in his sketch on Scamozzi, "neither contempt nor slander, but rather esteem and ambition to excel, will help one to surpass the achievements of the truly great!"

Vincenzo Scamozzi was born in Vicenza in 1552, when Palladio had already reached the zenith of his fame. Vincenzo's father was in a position to offer his promising son every educational advantage, and thus he was able to travel far and, like his father, study the art of many countries. In Venice he sat at the feet of Sansovino, whom, in after days, he invariably placed above Palladio, and whose disciple he

became. Before he was two-and-twenty the ambitious youth had composed a work in ten parts on perspective, and had studied profoundly all the writings of Vitruvius. Rome was ever his favourite abode, and four times he journeyed thither, the result of these visits being a voluminous and exhaustive work on the Roman Thermæ. He also visited Naples, where he was the architect of several villas and palaces.

On the death of Sansovino, Scamozzi was summoned to Venice to complete the Library of San Marco, which task he accomplished skilfully and with success. In 1585 we hear of him in Vicenza, decorating and preparing the city for the reception of Maria of Austria, and designing the scenery for the Teatro Olimpico, which he pompously pronounced so fine as to be worth in itself alone more than all the work Palladio had put into the rest of the edifice. In 1593 we find him laying the corner-stone of a fortress in Friuli, and presently returning to Venice to finish the Procurazie Nuove, begun by Sansovino. It has become the fashion of late to blindly accept the verdict of a very able and favourite critic of modern times, and condemn the third story of the Procurazie, designed by Scamozzi and completed by Longhena, as utterly inartistic and out of harmony. It cannot, however, be denied that this addition is in itself a most massive and effective piece of work, and that it saves the buildings of the Piazza from the squat appearance they would certainly have without it, for the great church itself is not lofty, and the slim and soaring Campanile—now rapidly rising once more to its former height—would have eclipsed a building of less massive

and elevated proportions than the Procurazie Nuove. The somewhat crushed and flat appearance of the edifices surrounding the square in the days before the addition of Scamozzi's much criticized "upper story" is illustrated by the well-known work of Carpaccio, now in the Accademia.

A great work he was composing, entitled *Idea d'Architettura Universale*, occupied Scamozzi's thoughts and much of his time for many years, and it was in the interest of this study in architecture that he joined the train of some Venetian ambassadors to foreign courts, and with them visited France, Germany and Hungary. Upon his return to Italy orders crowded upon him, and he journeyed incessantly from place to place designing and planning palaces and churches, building bridges, theatres and villas. His finest piece of work in Vicenza is undoubtedly the Palazzo Trissino on the Corso, which was finished by Ottone Calderari, and which now serves as town-hall, having recently been purchased by the city.

Scamozzi's style in architecture was simple, majestic and imposing; in writing he was pompous, affected and full of conceit. He died and was buried in Venice in 1616.

His character and the conditions of his life may be said to have been the very opposite of the character and conditions of Palladio. The one was gentle, affectionate, humble and unassuming; the other masterful, cold-hearted, arrogant and vain. The one was poor at the beginning and poor at the end of his glorious career, leaving as a heritage to his beloved city only the "memory of his great virtues," dying



Bassano

Photo Edne Alinari

"THE RECTORS OF THE REPUBLIC AT THE FEET OF THE VIRGIN"
(*City Museum*)

quietly and meekly, and mourned by many whom he had befriended, by a wife to whom he had been a true and loving husband, by children to whom he had been a devoted and tender father; the other rich at the beginning and rich at the end of his brilliant days, leaving a peremptory order to his native town to erect to his memory a monument worthy of his greatness, dying rebelliously and noisily, and, as a result of his disordered and dissolute life, mourned neither by wife nor children, his last words being a loud declaration that his name would live for ever. The one shunning ostentation, and delighting in the society and friendship of such men as Paolo Veronese, Trissino, the Contarini, Vasari, Belli, Maganza, Zuccari, Fasolo and Speranza; the other haunting the courts of princes and following in the wake of pompous ambassadors and cringing courtiers.

* * * * *

A century or more elapsed after the death of Scamozzi before another skilful architect appeared upon the scene. The Abbot *Domenico Cerato*, a native of Vicenza, who died in 1792, was for many years professor of architecture at the University of Padua. He it was who created an observatory at Padua, the finest in Europe at that time, remodelling for the purpose the ancient tower in which Ezzelino had once been wont to torture his unhappy victims. Cerato also directed the construction of the great hospital, and planned the promenade still known as the Prato della Valle, with its graceful arcades, its numerous statues and finely proportioned bridges. Although a son of Vicenza, the worthy abbot would appear to have

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identified himself completely with Padua, and to have devoted all his energy to embellishing the city of his adoption.

A second Vicentine whose knowledge of architecture made him famous was Count *Enea Arnaldi*, born in 1716, for many years director of the work of restoring the Basilica, and whose writings on theatres ancient and modern, and on the Basilica of Palladio and the courts of justice of the Romans, bear witness to his profound and intimate knowledge of the buildings of all periods.

Ottavio Bertotti, born in 1726, earned the famous legacy left by Scamozzi, and is, therefore, best known as *Bertotti-Scamozzi*, but—oh bitter irony of fate!—how would the vain and jealous testator have raved, could he have known that Ottavio would reach the pinnacle of fame through the earnest and affectionate study of the creations not of his benefactor but of his benefactor's hated rival, Palladio!

Bertotti's youth was devoted to the composition of a splendid work on the Palladian monuments, which was published in Vicenza, with excellent illustrations. Having thus formed his taste and educated his eye, he proceeded to design many villas and summer-houses for noble and wealthy families throughout the province, some of these buildings being so truly Palladian in style as to deceive even the most competent critics.

The last of Vicenza's sons to distinguish himself in architecture was *Giovanni Miglioranza*, born in 1798. Like so many of his predecessors, he began his career as a humble carpenter, never learning even to read

and write, we are told, until he was past twenty. After some years of training at the Accademia in Venice, he returned to his native town to perfect himself in architecture by the study of the monuments that there surrounded him. His important work on the Teatro Berga, and the many fine modern buildings in and about Vicenza of which he was the creator, have ensured his position among the leading architects of the nineteenth century. Miglioranza died in 1861, having first had the satisfaction of witnessing the completion, through his means, of that admirable Palladian monument, the Palazzo Chiericati, now the Museum.

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The influence of Vicenza's school of architecture has been far-reaching. Even in distant Russia there exist some fine examples of the Palladian style, and Scamozzi himself was summoned to Salzburg, there to build a cathedral. We find magnificent country-houses in England built from the designs of *Mistro* Andrea, and the colonial architecture of far-away New England and of the Southern States, with its flights of broad and shallow steps leading to column-supported porticoes, its temple-like façades and its avowedly Palladian windows, is suggestive of the more substantial stone and brick creations of the city by the Bacchiglione.

The architectural traditions of the ancients were preserved by Vitruvius, studied and elucidated by Fra Giocondo, and once more given form and being by Palladio and his immediate successors. After the insane aberrations of the *Barocco*, and the austere

and often graceless simplicity of the *Empire*, architecture—in Italy at least—is now once more returning to Palladio and consequently to the classic, and the monuments of recent creation in Rome, such as the Palace of Justice and the still unfinished memorial to Victor Emanuel, are worthy to grace the city where the Basilica Julia and the Temple of Cæsar once stood in all the beauty of perfection and purity of style and all the glory of lavish and splendid execution.

PART III



Part III

CHAPTER I

VICENZA'S PARKS AND PALACES

VICENZA has the advantage of making a favourable first impression. Whether the traveller be coming from Venice or Verona, the train has for many miles been running across a fertile, well-watered, smiling plain, upon which look down from abruptly uprising cliff-like heights, the strongholds of the Middle-Ages and the villas of a later period. In the blue distance the snow-crowned Alps stand eternal guard, shutting out the bleak north, and sending down rushing streams of sparkling water, powerful allies of the miracle-working sun. The Euganean Hills roll gently southwards, vine-clad and verdant, dotted with white villas flanked by soaring cypresses, and darkened in places by thick groves of spreading hornbeams. Monte Berico, with its famous Sanctuary and splendid country houses, arrests the eye, and then immediately the many towers of Vicenza herself loom against the deep blue of a dazzling sky.

Upon leaving the station the traveller finds himself in the green and spacious Campo Marzio of the Roman days, which has now become a public promenade, and forms part of the charming park that surrounds the greater part of the city. This park, through which

the river Retrone winds, is shaded by enormous horse-chestnut trees that make it a delightfully cool resort even on summer's hottest day. Rich and poor gather here for recreation and exercise. The children of the "palace dwellers," walking demurely beside German governesses—it is "the thing" to have a German governess for one's children in Vicenza—look with eyes of envy upon the ragged urchins from the slums rolling upon the grass, or wading into the deliciously muddy canal after fat white ducks, that flap noisily away at their approach.

At certain hours, in summer from six to eight of an afternoon, many handsome equipages may be seen, with well-set-up coachmen and grooms and powerful high-stepping horses. It is one of the many pleasant things about Vicenza that one sees no cruelty to animals; it seems to me, indeed, that her burghers are a more or less cat and dog-ridden class. Cats sit in undisputed possession of sunny Gothic doorways, and birds sing on almost every balcony. Old gentlemen wile away the hours outside the quiet cafés, with their fat and wheezing canine friends beside them, to whom much conversation is addressed and lumps of sugar are administered at frequent intervals. In the public gardens dogs are everywhere, and as there are no flowers, only acres and acres of short green grass, no restraint is placed upon them.

It was beneath the towering chestnut trees of this promenade that the "lady who dabbled in politics" and the "facetious cavalier" of Fogazzaro's *Man of the World* had their little confidential talk, while the lady's carriage followed slowly behind. You may

find them wandering under the trees to-day, if you choose to look for them !

The road into the town leads across the Campo Marzio, past the theatre, and beneath an arch that was erected in 1608, and was a gift to the city from one of her Venetian governors. The south face, restored in 1838, now bears the following inscription, in memory of King Victor Emanuel's visit in 1866—

A VITTORIO EMANUELE
RE GALANTUOMO.
I VICENTINI LIBERI
RICONOSCENTI.
ANNO MDCCCLXVI.

Opposite the arch is the entrance to the gardens of *Palazzo Salvi*, which contain Palladio's lovely *Loggia*, that sits in perpetual admiration of its own beauty reflected in the still waters of the stream that flows beneath.

Here at *Porta di Castello*, where the tower now stands and the bland official in blue politely asks if the Signora has "anything for the *dazio*," Ezzelino da Romano had his well-guarded habitation. Hither came ambassadors to sue for peace, the relatives of great nobles bringing ransom for their captive chiefs, haughty barons to utter reluctant submission, and weeping wives to plead for imprisoned husbands. Hence the bloodstained tyrant issued forth at night, hastening along the dark and narrow streets on errands of cruelty and revenge, and here were pronounced those sentences that so often plunged Vicenza's children into grief and mourning. This stronghold of iniquity was

demolished by the maddened populace upon the tyrant's death in 1259.

The present tower is part of a strongly-fortified castle which Cangrande della Scala caused to be erected here, and the gate is one of the outlets in the walls which had been in existence for centuries before the Scaliger's day, but which was restored and completed by him.

Just beyond the Porta di Castello on the right is the so-called *Biblioteca del Seminario*. It is an unfinished gem of the Palladian school, and inspires us with awe when we consider what its author intended it to become.

The Corso, that street of palaces, is always crowded, and in places so narrow that unless we walk in the roadway we shall probably fail to notice some of the finest edifices. Most of the palaces on the upper Corso, if not by the master himself, are in the Palladian style. Such were the taste and skill of the nobles in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that many palaces were built from their owner's own plans and designs. Of these *Palazzo Bonin*, on the Corso, is a beautiful example. It is believed to have been designed by Count Marcantonio Thiene, towards the end of the sixteenth century, the work of construction being executed under the supervision of Vincenzo Scamozzi. It is severe and elegant in line, and contains an imposing courtyard with a lofty portico, formed by two orders of remarkably light and graceful Corinthian columns. In this palace Napoleon was entertained in 1807. The palaces in the Gothic style are anterior to Palladio's time, dating almost exclusively from the fifteenth



Cima da Conegliano

Photo Ed^{ne}. Alinari

"MADONNA ENTHRONED"

(City Museum)

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century. Such is the *Palazzo da Schio* on the Corso, which Tognone covered with beautiful frescoes against such glittering backgrounds of gold as to gain for the house the title of *Cà d'Oro*—the Golden Mansion. These frescoes have long since disappeared ; the name only has survived.

Many Gothic edifices adorn the city, and so closely resemble in style the architecture prevalent in Venice at the same period that we can fancy them rising up out of the Grand Canal, or looming at the end of some quiet *Calle*. Such, to mention only a few, are the *Thiene* and *Braschi Palaces* on the Corso, this last having a charming little chapel in its untidy courtyard ; *Palazzo Porto*, in Contrada Porti ; *Palazzo Canizza-Fiorasi* in Via San Michele, and dainty *Casa Longhi*, near the church of Santo Stefano.

Lovely doorways there are everywhere, and pretty balconies and carved window-frames surprise us on all sides. But of all the Gothic constructions little *Casa Pigafetta* is the gem. It is situated in Contrada della Luna, and was once the home of the Pigafetta who sailed with Magellan in 1519, and was with the great navigator when he entered the ocean which he christened the Pacific. Pigafetta afterwards wrote the history of this voyage. The style of the small building is no longer pure Gothic, but has already felt the influence of the Renaissance. Its author, however, was a true artist, and has combined the beauties of both manners, never falling into exaggeration or the grotesque. Slender twisted columns support the pointed arches of the graceful windows ; griffins crouch beneath airy, trifoliate balconies ; fierce

eagles, rich garlands and delicately wrought rosettes ornament the whimsical façade, while upon the base beneath the windows on either side of the door, are the words: *Il n'est rose—sans épines*. This motto is surrounded by twining roses, the emblems of the Pigafetta crest.

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Contrada Porti offers lovely examples of most of the styles that have graced Vicenza since 1180, when, owing to a family feud, Count Bonifazio di San Bonifazio destroyed the palace and twin towers of the Morisio family that had hitherto occupied the greater part of this quarter. I begin with the house bearing the number seventeen, Palazzo Colleoni-Porto. This is a charming Gothic edifice with much ornamentation about doors and windows. The door opening upon the narrow balcony is of most graceful proportions, and is flanked by two equally graceful windows. Number fifteen has recently changed hands, and is at present undergoing much-needed restorations. It is a fine edifice from Palladio's own designs, and is one of the most severe and strictly classical of his creations. The first, fourth and seventh windows are adorned with massive ornamentation, well adapted to the austere lines of the façade, while four dignified statues in thoughtful attitudes adorn the attic.

Palazzo Colleoni bears the number thirteen, and is in the ornate Italian-Gothic style, with a magnificent portal of the red marble of Verona. The marble disks surrounded by a carved wreath, and showing in the centre a metal pin with large bronze head, are a strange and characteristic form of ornamentation

upon the façade. Beneath the lovely arch of the portal a glimpse is caught of swinging grape-vines, green grass and spreading trees. The vines twine loving arms about a portico in the courtyard, which is of extreme beauty. The slender pillars with their burden of clinging green, the stair resting on graceful arches, with its carved and polished marbles, form a whole so harmonious and so lovely as to convey that sense of awe and respect which we experience in the presence of a masterpiece.

Palazzo Porto (number eleven) is in the fine, less florid Gothic of the late fifteenth century. Its portal is the famous *Janua Clara*, which Fogazzaro has so cleverly described in *The Man of the World*, and I cannot do better than quote Carlino's enthusiastic outburst of admiration when the magic-lantern revealed its lovely outline during his lecture in the Foresteria of Villa Diedo: "... O thou who art worthy to grace the palace of Atlantis, I choose thee for my introduction ! Thy blood-red and still formless members were wrenched from the bowels of some wild mountain by the strength of mighty arms ; and, meanwhile, thy pure soul flashed in the soul of the ancient artificer like a glowing spark, until at last, through the laborious conjunction of spirit and stone, thy arch was slowly rounded and shaped, thy arch which is a symbol of a full and rich life, of the path of beauty through time, of hope in the heart of the wise."

Between the slender columns that support the delicate bilateral windows are two heads in high relief. Long-necked thin-featured damsels these, with curls

and smiling aristocratic lips, who have looked down for centuries on the life in the street below. The courtyard boasts a fine loggia, with a severe and massive balustrade of whitest marble.

Palazzo Bertolini (number ten on the opposite side) is also in the fifteenth-century Gothic, and shows little ornamentation save its beautifully-wrought marble balconies and a strangely shaped iron grating at one only of the three openings beneath the eaves. Was there once a madman in the family, or was some treasure jealously guarded in this lofty chamber?

Number nine we should pass by with but a glance, for it appears a very ordinary modern structure, out of keeping with its surroundings, were it not for the inscription upon its façade, which tells us that here lived and died in 1529, at the early age of three-and-forty, *Luigi da Porto*, the historian of the League of Cambray, the clever rhymster, and the author of the story of Romeo and Juliet. Da Porto was a disciple of Petrarch, an intimate of Trissino, of Bembo and of Marco Thiene, all highly-esteemed *literati* of that period. The house in which the poet dwelt has been so often rebuilt and restored that were it not for unmistakable signs of great age in the narrow courtyard, we should be inclined to doubt the accuracy of the date upon the façade.

On the corner of Contrada Riale stands *Palazzo Porto-Barbaran*, a magnificent building in which the genius of Palladio has caused the severe Ionic to mingle and even harmonize with a wealth of ornamentation, of garlands, festoons and cherubs, these bas-reliefs being attributed to Vittoria. Here the heavy

lower order is surmounted by the lighter Corinthian, crowned by a massive cornice, this again surmounted by a well-proportioned attic. This princely dwelling has opened its hospitable doors to many illustrious guests since the day of its completion in the year 1572. Here Cosimo III de' Medici lodged in 1674, while Frederick IV of Denmark, Frederick Augustus of Saxony and Anna de' Medici are among the number of its distinguished visitors.

Opposite Palazzo Barbaran is the *Banca Popolare*, composed of two palaces which once belonged to the Thiene family. The Lombard edifice in Contrada Porti has been skilfully and artistically restored. The medallions upon its façade contain the likenesses of (first on the left) Fromenton, Fogolino, Bartolommeo Montagna, Valerio Belli, Buonconsiglio and Albanese. Above the balcony are three heads in terra-cotta, representing Palladio, Scamozzi and Calderari. The magnificent red marble portal is said to have once graced the ancient Teatro Berga, together with the portals of Palazzo Colleoni in Contrada Porti, and of the Cà d'Oro on the Corso. The courtyard of the Banca Popolare is a fine example of Palladio's manner, massive and ponderous, but still graceful and pleasing.

At certain hours this courtyard is open and may be crossed, allowing the visitor to pass beneath another spacious portal on the opposite side, and thus reach Contrada Giacomo Zanella, which is graced by the second façade of the Banca Popolare. This edifice, which was left unfinished, was to have reached the Corso on the left, thus forming one immense block with the other Thiene palace facing Contrada Porti. It was

erected in 1556 by order of Marc' Antonio Thiene, as an inscription on this second front declares, its architect being the great Palladio himself.

Directly opposite the church of Santo Stefano stands *Palazzo Negri*, the severe simplicity of its Lombard lines contrasting equally with the light and graceful Gothic of its neighbour on the right, and the ponderous and majestic proportions of the Banca Popolare on the left.

Palazzo Longhi—a charming Gothic edifice—has undergone many changes in the course of centuries, as the numerous arches and windows that have been bricked up, but are still plainly visible in the façade, would prove.

Another beautiful creation by Palladio is the *Palazzo Valmarana* in Contrada Pozzo Rosso. This blending of Corinthian and Composite was built for Count Leonardo Valmarana, who entertained here in the year 1581 the Empress Maria Augusta, wife of Maximilian II, with her two children, Margherita and Maximilian.

In every street, in every lane, lovely bits of architecture are to be found, and, as much brick and terracotta enters into the Gothic and Lombard constructions, the tints are warm and rich, while, against this background of red and deepest yellow, the wrought-iron that adorns balconies and windows stands out in vivid and pleasing contrast.

Long after the master had been laid to rest in Santa Corona, the Palladian style continued to prevail in Vicenza. *Scamozzi*, the prolific, the vain and boastful, who descended into the grave shouting that his name would sound eternally, has indeed left a beautiful



Bart Montagna

Photo Ed^{ne}. Alinari

“ THE PRESENTATION ”
(*City Museum*)



monument in his native city, in *Palazzo Trissino-Baston*, on the Corso. Recently purchased and restored by the town, it now contains the municipal offices. The scenery of the Teatro Olimpico is also by Scamozzi, and the perfection of its perspective alone would suffice to ensure its author's position among the great architects of all times.

Calderari, a later admirer and imitator of Palladio, was the author of *Palazzo Cordellina* in Contrada Riale, and of the magnificent *Palazzo Loschi* (now *Zileri*) on the Corso. *Palazzo Cordellina* is classic in every line. Ten Doric columns constitute the lower order, which an entablature ornamented with the sacrificial emblems and heavy garlands separates from the Ionic order above. The windows are surmounted some by round and others by pointed arches; above runs a fine cornice, while an attic worthily crowns the edifice. This palace now contains the Normal School, and the Kindergarten that bear the name of Don Giuseppe Fogazzaro, the *Don Giuseppe Flores* of *The Man of the World*, and an uncle of Antonio Fogazzaro.

I cannot refrain from pointing out the lovely low-arched doorway of number four in the same street. This is a fine example of the terra-cotta work of the fifteenth century, and the wrought-iron gratings of the two windows and of the gate beyond are beautiful specimens of the blacksmith's art.

In Contrada di Santa Corona stands *Palazzo Milano-Massari*, built in 1686 and eminently Barocco in composition. The splendid loggia in its courtyard cannot fail, however, to inspire admiration for the richness of its stuccoes by Alessandro Vittoria, the grace of

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its statues by Orazio Marinali, the unusual and pleasing curve of its arches, and—above all—for the delicate tracery and airy lightness of its lovely wrought-iron balustrade.

Many of Vicenza's palaces look out at the back on splendid gardens, especially those that came into existence during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Thus behind *Palazzo Dalle Ore-Quirini* in Contrada di San Marco, stretches a superb park, laid out and decorated to suit the taste of the late eighteenth century. Beyond a beautifully wrought iron gate a vista of deepest, freshest green meets the eye of the visitor. Statues of nymphs, fauns, goddesses and toga-swathed Romans stand out in dazzling whiteness against the verdant background of trees and bushes that line either side of a broad avenue, which at one point is interrupted by a rushing stream spanned by a graceful bridge. Beyond the avenue, still flanked by statues, Corinthian vases and orange-trees in ornamental pots, a sweep of green leads across fields to an Ionic temple upon a slight elevation, behind which towers a magnificent umbrella-pine.

CHAPTER II

CATHEDRAL, EPISCOPAL PALACE AND ORATORIO DEL DUOMO

THE venerable and imposing cathedral stands in an open square below the Corso. Tradition points to Prosdocimus, friend and disciple of Peter and the apostle of Venetia in the days of Diocletian, as founder of the church ; but although we should like to believe that the holy man did indeed lay the corner-stone of this monument, we find no satisfactory proof of the existence of a cathedral in Vicenza in his time.

The Duomo probably occupies the site of some Roman building. During excavations for the foundation of the choir two marble slabs were brought to light, one bearing the name of Matidia, the sister-in-law of Hadrian, the other making mention of one of the Valentinians. The massive base of the bell-tower to the south of the church was also part of a Roman edifice, but whether it was used as a prison, a reservoir, or a repository for treasure or salt, is a much debated question. That the great blocks of which it is formed are of Roman origin is indisputable. It is also more than probable that a church occupied the site of the present cathedral at a very early date, for in the year 1386 the bodies of the martyrs Leonzio, Carpoforo, Innocenza and Eufemia, who suffered during the first decade of the fourth century, were discovered here,

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as the result of excavations beneath the high altar. A tradition had long existed to the effect that the bodies of these saints had been hidden somewhere in the cathedral, and, guided by visions and mystic revelations, certain pious churchmen did indeed bring to light a massive coffin containing the precious relics. They were interred in the second chapel on the left of the main entrance, where they still rest.

That a part of the church was at one time surrounded by a high wall is satisfactorily established by a well-authenticated incident. In the year 1174 the monks of a certain monastery which St. Theobald the Hermit had founded in the neighbourhood of Vicenza, desirous of recovering the saint's body which had been removed from the convent and interred in the cathedral, hid one of their number, with two workmen, between "the high wall and the church," where they remained until they had succeeded in digging their way beneath the foundations, entering the crypt and removing the pious hermit's remains.

The southern part of the Duomo was erected in 1290, and an episcopal palace probably occupied the site of the present modern *Vescovado*, of which the lovely *Loggia* in the courtyard is the most ancient portion. It was constructed in Cardinal Zeno's time (1494) by *Formenton*, who was also the architect of the famous Loggia in Brescia, which for more than a century was universally admired and extolled as one of Bramante's masterpieces. The courtyard of the Episcopal Palace, shaded by spreading chestnut trees, with its picturesque well and graceful, ornate loggia, is certainly one of the finest in Vicenza.

The ancient *Vescovado* was probably strongly fortified, for we read of bishops at odds with the people, shutting themselves up here with their troops and retainers, and offering strenuous and successful resistance to all attacks. A lofty battlemented tower stood at the southern extremity of the edifice until the year 1812, when it was demolished for the purpose of enlarging the square. Ancient chroniclers often allude to the *Vescovado* in connexion with the visits of emperors and church dignitaries, and it was while walking in its shady courtyard that the Emperor Frederick II, who had that day confided the city to the care of Ezzelino da Romano, imparted to him the bloody lesson which he learnt so readily, and so ruthlessly put into practice. "Thus," said the monarch, cutting down with his sword some grasses that towered above the rest, "thus shalt thou deal with such as aspire to power and supremacy."

But to return to the Cathedral. The name of the architect of the main façade is unknown. He must, however, have been either a contemporary or an immediate predecessor of Formenton, for just above the rose-window and beneath the cornice of the second order, the words Ave Maria and the date 1467 may be deciphered, cunningly worked into the carved ornamentation. Some of the letters that were too high for the loops into which they must fit, have been carved horizontally—sublime adaptability of the ancients! A fourth order originally crowned the façade, but it was overthrown in the sixteenth century during a violent storm, and caused much damage to the vaulting of the edifice. In style the façade is between the Gothic and

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the Lombard, and rather severe than beautiful. The building acquired its present form in the course of the frequent and thorough restorations of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the great portal was restored and embellished in 1792 by Ottone Calderari, one of the many Vicentine architects who have followed gloriously in the footsteps of Palladio.

The apse or tribune which now contains the high altar was erected in 1574, and there is reason to believe that the plans and designs were the work of the same master who built the church of San Rocco. The base is in the pure Lombard style, which further up becomes distinctly Renaissance, to end in a dome that is eminently Palladian. It is indeed supposed that the master's disciples and pupils designed the upper part of this adjunct.

Entering the Cathedral by the main portal, the visitor is delighted by the majestic proportions of the broad, well-lighted nave, flanked by its twelve chapels and crowned by its lofty tribune, to which a beautiful flight of steps of deep red marble leads gently upwards. The interior is intensely impressive in its severe but generous lines, in the free sweep of its vaulting and its simple decorations. The gilded carvings that span the lofty nave and adorn the tops of arches and columns give the necessary relieving touch to the ponderous and massive proportions of the church, and are perhaps to be preferred to the brilliant frescoes that once covered the walls.

There is everywhere a profusion of the red marble of Verona and Chiampo. The splendid stairs leading to the high altar are believed to have once graced the

Teatro Berga. Upon those steps, so often pressed by the pagan feet of the enemies of Christianity, the altar candles are now shedding a mellow light, intensifying and deepening the rich red of the polished marble, and, as I gaze, the venerable Bishop in glistening cope and lofty mitre, advancing slowly from the altar, pauses at their head, and, lifting aloft the shining-monstrance containing the consecrated host, imparts the blessing of the Lord of Peace to the faithful who kneel in reverent silence below. Down the steps come the acolytes, their white-robed figures standing out in clear outline against the warm red background. As the fragrant incense floats upwards in grey diaphanous clouds through which the gem-incrusted mitre looms in mystic splendour, the conviction is brought home to me, as to every member of that silent and reverent assembly, that "God's in His heaven—All's well with the world."

And now the organ peals forth a song of triumph and rejoicing. The Benediction is over, the Bishop with his gorgeous train of priests and acolytes comes slowly down the broad majestic stairs and disappears within the sacristy, while the great doors are flung wide, admitting a dazzling flood of afternoon sunshine, and the faithful scatter noiselessly in all directions.

Here the great Council of the Four Hundred was wont to meet before the days of Palladio's Basilica. Here were assembled the ambassadors of Vicenza, Verona, Padua and Treviso in 1164, and here they planned a confederation which, three years later, became the glorious Lombard League. The Emperor Frederick III was offered solemn reception here in

1489, and Blessed Bernardino da Feltre filled the edifice with his burning words in 1492. Hither the sons of princes were brought for baptism, and warriors laid to their last repose, while every hour of every day for centuries the prayers of the faithful have risen with the soaring incense, save once for five long years, when the great portal was closed against the sorrowing people, and the church lay under the ban of interdiction. The closing of the Cathedral was brought about in this wise—

When the League of Cambray had overpowered Venice in the year 1510, five citizens of Vicenza were left to choose between submitting to the plunder and confiscation of their estates, and the payment of a crushingly heavy fine. To raise the sum necessary they appealed to a Florentine merchant, promising payment in the form of raw silk at a stated time. The interest demanded was exorbitant, but the need was pressing, and the nobles promised faithfully to accept the consequences of their breach of faith, should they fail to pay in full. But the fortunes of war soon veered, and once more Venice triumphed. Then the Vicentines, protesting the illegality of the interest that had been demanded, refused to satisfy the Florentine merchant's claims. In those days the sacred nature of a contract was too often disregarded, and an edict had recently gone forth from Rome, threatening with excommunication all who should prove unfaithful to solemnly contracted obligations, this punishment to embrace the entire parish in which such faithless persons should have their residence. Thus in Vicenza five churches—the *Duomo* among others—came under

the ban, and protests and prayers were of no avail, until the town finally paid the Florentine in full, whereupon the doors of the sacred edifices were thrown open, and the rejoicing populace was admitted once more.

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Following the injunctions of the venerable Boschini, whose precious little volume, published more than two centuries ago, is my constant companion, I begin by examining the two large canvases between the first and second altars on either side of the main entrance. On the right is the Miraculous Draught of Fishes, on the left the Conversion of Paul. Both of these are by *Giovanni Battista Zelotti*, who executed the frescoes on the façade of the Monte di Pietà in such a masterly manner as to excite the admiration of all who saw them in their glory. The present works reveal Zelotti rather as a decorator than as a painter of sacred subjects. The figures are so monstrous and the confusion of composition so great that only upon the broad face of a lofty edifice could such creations as these prove effective, and then only as fine masses of colour. To see the glory of Zelotti a pilgrimage must be made to the church of San Rocco, where hangs the masterpiece representing St. Helena discovering the Cross. Therein indeed he gives proof of his excellence as a draughtsman and colourist, and of his powers of composing and rendering dramatic and animated situations.

In the first chapel on the left is a group of figures, some in stone and others in terra-cotta, and certainly all dating from different periods, which form a strange and unusual combination. The simple monument

to Gaetano Thiene which adorns the wall of this chapel was probably a work of the Albanesi. This Gaetano Thiene was a captain of troops under Ferdinand II and Maximilian II, and banner-bearer of the kingdom of Hungary as well. He perished because he dared to box his countess's ears, though in what manner the lady brought about his death is not made clear. His funeral pageant, concerning which he left minute directions, was a great event, and filled the province with wonder and admiration. Nothing so splendid in the way of an interment had ever been witnessed.

The altar-piece in the second chapel—Christ on Mount Tabor—is by *Alessandro Maganza*, but is much blackened, as are also the four large canvases on the walls, which are likewise attributed to Maganza, and illustrate the martyrdom of the saints Leonzio and Carpofo. A master-hand, Maganza's or another's, certainly executed parts of these works, but the drawing is often faulty and the composition too confused, too complicated, to be attributed to him, although, as we have said before, Alessandro was fond of crowding and confusion. Many of the heads, however, considered as portraits, are striking and realistic.

The Loschi Chapel was founded about the year 1463 by Antonio of that family, whom a slab with an inscription commemorates, but who probably was not buried here, as the chapel was not finished at the time of his death. He was a man of letters of great renown in his day, and wrote, besides learned Commentaries on Cicero, a Latin tragedy and much verse. He was chancellor and secretary of Gian Galeazzo Visconti, and the confidant of two popes. The owl which figures

in the Loschi crest is an allusion to the wisdom of the great Antonio. The altar-piece in this chapel is by Cittadella (end of seventeenth century), from which it is a relief—to me, at least—to turn to the early masters of the following chapel, the gem of the cathedral.

The altar, itself a charming work of art, is surmounted by a canvas by *Bartolommeo Montagna*. The slab beneath the altar-table is of the beautiful red marble of Chiampo with a rude bas-relief representing a warrior, probably a member of the Barbarano family, in adoration before the Infant Christ. The shafts forming the frame of Montagna's picture are exquisitely carved and daintily gilded, and in perfect harmony with the calm, dignified, gentle atmosphere of the lovely composition. It is, alas, like so many gems, much blackened by the smoke of candles, but the heads and the figure of the Child still stand boldly forth in all the pure and solemn majesty with which the artist endowed them. The influence of the Bellini is very apparent in the composition and colour-scheme of this picture, but it is Montagna who speaks in the regal pose and grave expression of the figures, in the easy flow of cloak and veil. It is interesting to note the change that takes place in Montagna's style when he lays aside the palette and mounts the fresco-painter's scaffolding. The four saints—two large square pictures and two medallions—on either side of the altar are also by this artist. With the fast drying plaster waiting to receive his inspiration the painter has little leisure to ponder and study, and once the brush has touched the wall there the line it has traced must forever remain. Observe the charming figure in yel-

low on the right. It is St. Margaret, I believe, but it matters little who the majestic lady be. What strength of handling is here, what swift inspiration and rapid conception, and how modern, how broad and free is the result! A queenly, imposing figure has Montagna given us, a triumphant martyr draped in flowing robes, and bearing witness to the master's power, from one generation to another.

Girolamo dal Toso of the school of Montagna, who flourished in Vicenza during the first half of the sixteenth century, is the creator of the frescoes that adorn either wall. They are strong in colouring and interesting in composition, but have suffered much from time and damp.

The following altar contains a stone group executed by *Antonio da Venezia* in 1448, and unfortunately "recently restored," the restoration consisting apparently in a fresh coat of glaring paint, washed over with the shiniest possible varnish. The body of Blessed Giovanni dei Sordi Cacciafronte has rested beneath this altar since 1441, when it was removed from the fine Gothic sarcophagus that now adorns the southern wall of the cathedral. It will be remembered that Bishop Cacciafronte was murdered near the *Vescovado* by hired assassins, and died with blessings for his murderers upon his lips. The fine stone monument on the left was erected in 1537 to the memory of a bishop of the da Schio family, and is the work of *Girolamo Pironi* and of that *Giovanni* the stone-mason whom tradition points out as the master of Palladio. One of the monuments in this chapel bears an inscription in memory of a certain ecclesiastic by the name

of *Agostino Rapa*. This Rapa, who was one of the founders of the *Accademia Olimpica*, and who died in 1583, was, like Maganza, a clever rhymster in dialect, and celebrated the beauty of the maid Thietta, whom he declared to be the most beautiful woman the world had ever seen and *honestissima* as well, which was fortunate, her admirer being a priest !

The Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament contains an altar-piece and six scenes from the Passion, all by *Alessandro Maganza*, and all of real excellence.

The Last Supper, on the right, is the best preserved and perhaps the most powerful of the six compositions upon the walls. How unconstrained are the attitudes, how graceful the folds of flowing garments, how rich and deep the reds and yellows of the shimmering fabrics in which the figures are clothed ! The scene in the garden is touching in the extreme. Agony both of soul and body shakes the frail figure of the Saviour kneeling in the glorious light that shines upon Him from the chalice which a cherub clasps, floating amidst the illumined clouds.

A relic of the ancient *Palazzo del Capitano* that made way for Palladio's construction, may be seen on the left in the atrio of the sacristy. This is a statue of Our Lady and the Infant Jesus, and was presented to the city by a member of the Barbarano family. For many years it stood beneath the portico of the earlier edifice in the *Piazza dei Signori*.

The lofty tribune contains canvases by Cittadella, Loth, Zanchi, Celesti and Liberi, in keeping with the Barocco of the decorations which surround them, and which, it cannot be denied, are excellent of their

kind. The wooden angels that mount guard upon the balustrade are by the famous Orazio Marinali, and the splendid pavement was laid in 1501, at the expense of the Barbarano family.

The truly magnificent high-altar was the gift, in 1535, of a certain *Cavaliere Aurelio Dall' Aqua*, who himself collected the precious marbles that adorn it. This gentleman, whose bones rest before the altar he so generously presented, left a sum of money in trust, sufficient to endow seven maidens annually with six-hundred francs apiece. It was stipulated that they be chosen by lottery, and that the ceremony should take place on the first Sunday after Easter, upon the testator's tomb in the cathedral. The maids, however, made so much noise and behaved altogether in a manner so little befitting the surroundings that it was soon decided to perform the ceremony in the bishop's palace, where it still takes place on the appointed day.

The Gothic choir and organ-lofts are fine modern works.

In the chapel beneath the tribune are several interesting inscriptions which have been removed at different times from the upper church. The altar is adorned by a group in stone, a very primitive work of the so-called *Madonne nere* time, when the Byzantine influence still predominated in art.

The atrio of the south entrance contains a large trough of Lombard origin, which for centuries served as a baptismal-font for the citizens of Vicenza.

The following chapel is one of the most interesting the church contains, and was founded by the *Cavaliere Gian Pietro de' Proti*, who died in 1412. The splendid

altar-piece on wood is the work of *Frate Lorenzo Scolaro*, a favourite pupil of Giotto, and was painted in 1366. That it was executed expressly for Vicenza is proved by the fact that the four saints on either side of the central group are the city's patrons, but the altar-piece is known to be anterior to the construction of the chapel which now contains it. It is an excellent and well preserved example of the gold background work of the fourteenth century, in which Cimabue and his school delighted.

The frescoes in this chapel, which are sadly damaged, are all attributed to *Bartolommeo Montagna*. The one upon the pillar at the left on entering is a portrait of Gian Pietro himself, whose ashes repose within the fine stone sarcophagus raised against the wall, towards which the kneeling man is gazing. The Madonna and Child in the fresco on the right are sufficiently well preserved to bear witness to the genius of their creator. They possess all the simplicity and charm with which the early masters endowed their figures.

This Gian Pietro de' Proti was a great captain in his day, and is remembered for his acts of valour, when he freed the town of the Carrarese and his Paduans, as well as for the fact that, with Giacomo Thiene, he had the honour of bearing Vicenza's spontaneous submission to Venice in 1404. His funeral was the most splendid military pageant the city had ever witnessed. But better than all his deeds of daring and courage were his deeds of charity, by one of which his beloved city profits to this day. He founded and richly endowed a home for destitute nobles and their families, such needy gentlemen being numerous

enough in his day, when wars and the strife of faction had stripped many of all they possessed. This home still exists in Via della Luna, not far from the cathedral, in the palace its founder built for it, and at the present moment some five-and-fifty families are housed within its walls. Each family has one or two rooms and a kitchen, and a pension of one and one-half francs per day. Wood is also free, and medicines, the doctor and a nurse are provided in case of need. The funds necessary for the up-keep of this splendid charity—which is no longer confined exclusively to members of the aristocracy—are derived from large estates which the testator himself possessed, and which, with modern methods of cultivation, have greatly increased in value and productiveness; thus the *graziati* now receive a much higher pension than in the beginning, when the daily allowance amounted only to about forty-five centimes of our money. Gian Pietro de' Proti's goodness shines in his face in the little faded fresco on the wall of his chapel, and his memory lives and is enshrined in the hearts of many, as it will continue to live and flourish as long as ancient institutions are respected and great public charities are an element of social economy.

The fourth chapel on the right contains an altarpiece representing St. Theobald by *Maganza* and is a good example of the master's skill as a portraitist. The picture on the left, attributed by Boschini to *Maganza*, and by the local guide to *Maffei*, we ourselves should hesitate to set down to either artist. This also represents St. Theobald, whose body, it will be remembered, was stolen from the crypt of the church.



Bart. Montagna

"MADONNA ENTHRONED"
(City Museum)

Photo Ed^{nc}. Alinari

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In the following chapel, on the left wall, is a splendid Adoration of the Magi by *Maffei*, a work truly Venetian in composition and colouring, while Paolo himself might well have been the author of at least three of the principal figures. The background is over-crowded and confused and the perspective faulty, but the main group in the immediate foreground is impressive and lovely. The canvases of the vault are also by *Maffei*, and contain some fine figures and bits of colour.

The stone group on the altar in the second chapel is a pleasing and graceful composition, wonderfully soft and delicate in workmanship.

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In the Piazza del Duomo, opposite the *Vescovado*, stands the *Casino Nuovo*, or Club House, erected in 1808 upon the foundations of the former Hospital of St. Anthony, where, in the course of centuries, so many were brought to die of pest and cholera.

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Beyond the Casino Nuovo and facing the cathedral rises the *Oratorio del Duomo*, one of the most interesting and magnificent monuments of Vicenza. Built in 1596, its architecture is that of the Renaissance, but the proportions of the façade are, nevertheless, broad and impressive.

The spacious and lofty interior is gorgeous with gold and rich with marbles and stucco, but although already savouring strongly of the Barocco, it is both imposing and pleasing, and cannot fail to elicit a cry of admiration. The pavement, sadly neglected and badly damaged in places, is of black, pink, yellow and white marble. Lofty pilasters of white marble, with elabor-

ately-sculptured capitals in stucco of the composite order, divide the walls into compartments, each of which contains a canvas surrounded by a massive frame of white stucco, surmounted by a gilded cherub who sustains two heavy garlands of golden fruits and flowers. Above these compartments is an entablature of red and yellow marble and gilded stucco. The opera-glass will reveal the great variety and delicacy of this work. Twelve statues of the school of *Vittoria*, representing sibyls and prophets, sit enthroned on brackets, one above each pilaster, some pointing to the second row of canvases that fill the space between the entablature and roof, while others, with bowed head and knitted brow, seem lost in contemplation and thought.

The richly-carved and brilliantly-coloured ceiling is a striking contrast to that of San Giacomo, with its severe lines and simple gilding. Here the wood is profusely sculptured and painted, and the deep-set frames are rich in fine stucco moulding, the whole producing an effect of profuse detail, of mellow golden depths, of intense beauty and majesty.

The high altar is magnificent, and richly adorned with marbles and sculptured stucco. The strange group of life-size stucco figures that surmounts it is, like the statues, of the school of *Vittoria*.

This oratory has fortunately been able to retain its works of art, and we see to-day each canvas occupying the space it was painted to fill. Rare examples of the later masters cover walls and ceiling, and bear deep-toned, living testimony to the glory of Vicenza's school of art when it had reached its highest point,

from which it was destined to descend, like all the other schools, into those depths of mannerism, of affectation and of the unreal—the late Renaissance.

The first picture on the left of the main portal—Our Lady leading the Child Christ, to whom an angel offers some dates—is by *Giovanni Battista Maganza*, junior, and so strong as to tempt us to attribute it to Alessandro himself. The landscape is charmingly conceived and well executed, the figures, with the exception of the angel, are cleverly drawn and well posed, and convey a convincing sense of haste and purpose. The double of the person below the angel (the donor perhaps) I saw but now at the Café Nazionale, so little has the Vicentine type changed in three hundred years. The Almighty and the hovering angels are disturbing, and a reminder that Giovanni Battista, even more than Alessandro, indulged in confusion at times.

The second canvas, the Meeting of Mary and Elisabeth, in which the Child Christ and the Baptist are embracing, while Joseph and Joachim clasp hands, is also by *Giovanni Battista*, and is much stronger in colour than the first. It is also superior in composition and entirely free from confusion, but the enormous figure of Joseph (or rather the red garment and the pair of feet that suggest him) is disturbing, filling up as it does so much of the foreground, while the mass of rich colour deadens and eclipses the lower and more delicate tints the artist has so skilfully introduced in the group on the right.

The following canvas is one of the rare examples of *Andrea Vicentino's* art, and represents the Virgin embracing the Child Christ in the Temple. A spacious

temple it is, indeed, lofty columns supporting bold arches and colonnades of glistening marble, through which we catch glimpses of sky and country. There is much detail here, there are many figures in the foreground, and we divine the multitude beyond, but there is no crowding, no confusion, and much beauty of line and colour. It must be confessed that the Virgin and Child savour strongly of the *Decadenza*, but, as a whole, the canvas is admirably modern and arresting.

And now follows a lovely signed work by *Alessandro Maganza*—Christ, risen from Limbo, appears to the Mother. The Son, in all the glory of the flesh and of vigorous manhood, but with the light of Godhood shining in His calm and tender face, bends lovingly over the delicate-featured, frail Madonna, who has been aroused from prayer by the sound of the beloved voice. With His left hand the Saviour points upwards to the floating angels who hold aloft the crown of thorns, while beyond shines the glorious golden light of Paradise. The Fathers kneel behind the Redeemer; Adam, looking as if he would like to rid himself of the fatal apple, which he bears in his hand, but Noah quite happy with his pretty white dove. The face of Eve—worn, saddened and deeply lined by childbearing, toil and repentance, and framed by white and wavy hair—looms hopefully behind our common father. Peace at last for all, and the joys of that glittering, dazzling Paradise!

The Annunciation, on the right wall beyond the high altar, is also by *Alessandro Maganza*, but, lacking the depth and warmth of colouring with which his pictures are usually endowed, fails to arrest attention.

Alessandro is also the author of the large, much blackened picture representing the Visit of the Shepherds. The handling of the light that irradiates from the Infant is suggestive of the Dutch and Flemish schools, but the picture is now too dark to give great pleasure. Boschini, writing in 1676, mentions it as a very fine creation.

Ah, but there is satisfaction indeed in the last two pictures on this wall, the Adoration of the Magi, by *Alessandro*, and the Presentation, by *Giovanni Battista Maganza*. The first is wanting in body, somewhat thin and flat, but charming in conception, truly spiritual, and interesting in detail. Many of the figures show traces of retouching, and I must really decline to believe that the hand that painted that soft fur-lined, velvet robe that drapes the grey-bearded Magi also painted that flat and foldless mass of blue that stands for the Virgin's mantle. How natural, how realistic are the two figures in the background, looking upwards at those awe-inspiring quadrupeds intended for horses, that are so like the camel beyond, except that *he* is beautifully woolly !

Giovanni Battista, son and grandson of poets and painters, was evidently proud of himself when he finished the Presentation, for he has placed his signature in a prominent position on the step occupied by the remarkably pretty female figure. He had reason to be satisfied, indeed, for this work shows him at his very best. Majestic in composition, cleverly arranged, warmly coloured and skilfully lighted is this delightful canvas, in which we see the venerable white-bearded priest standing to receive the Divine

Infant that Mary holds out to him. An old woman on the left—Saint Anne probably—has raised a warning finger in the most natural way in the world. "Hush, Baby! No tears at this solemn moment!" A fair-haired, full-bosomed woman sits upon the lowest step of the Temple, holding a basket containing two doves, and gazing at the group above her with smiling eyes, while an urchin looks forth from behind her with an inquisitive, somewhat impudent glance.

The frieze between the statues is the work of the Maganzas, and contains many fine figures.

And now the ceiling. The first two canvases on the right of the main entrance, the one representing a splendid sibyl with three children, the other, three austere virtues, are by *Porfirio Moretti*. The sibyl, with a book and some children, in the fifth compartment, the Vision of Paradise, above the high-altar, and the Virgin in Glory in the central row, are by *Andrea Vicentino*. The Christ in Glory, with a choir of angels, in front of the altar, is a splendid work by *Palma Vecchio*. All the other paintings of the ceiling are by *Alessandro Maganza*.

The great oval canvas in the centre, representing the coronation of the Blessed Virgin, is indeed a vision of Paradise. What a glory of light what upward motion, what soaring, floating and hovering, what joy and adoration! The whole ceiling is a poem of grand majestic figures, of awe-inspiring virtues, of solemn sibyls, of lovely women and beautiful children. *Maganza* surpasses himself in depth of colouring and boldness of conception; *Moretti* is Raphaelesque in the attitudes and expressions of his sibyls; *Palma* dazzles

and astounds by the glory of his sky, by the power of light and sense of motion he has imparted to the soaring figure of the Redeemer and His attendant angels; Andrea, Palma's pupil, delights with his lavish colouring and draws close to the master in the flow of his draperies and the regal pose of his figures.

A truly splendid monument, this Oratorio del Duomo, and an honour to the school that conceived and produced it !

CHAPTER III

PIAZZA DEI SIGNORI—PIAZZA DELLE ERBE—
BASILICA—PALAZZO DEL CAPITANIO—
SAN VINCENZO—MONTE DI PIETÀ—
BIBLIOTECA—TORRE—COLUMNS—SANTA
MARIA DE' SERVI

IT matters little whence the visitor obtains his first view of the Piazza dei Signori, the effect is always overwhelming.

I myself stumbled on this enchanted spot by moonlight—I use the word stumbled advisedly—for I was as ignorant of what I had to expect as are most of those who visit Vicenza for the first time, armed with the inevitable red-backed guide-book. Attracted by a sheen of moonshine at its foot I sauntered down the short Strada Cavour that leads from the Corso, and on reaching the corner, the whole glorious scene burst suddenly upon me. “But this is ancient Rome!” I breathed. It would have seemed like profanation to speak above a whisper in that vast, deserted, moonlit square, that appeared to harbour a sacred presence.

Before me rose the Basilica, flanked on one side by the statue of its author, on the other by the mighty tower that has soared slenderly upwards for so many centuries. Beyond towered the twin columns of Venetian days, one surmounted by the Lion of Mark,

the other bearing a statue of the Redeemer. Opposite the Basilica loomed the Palazzo del Capitano and the Monte di Pietà, then as now hidden by lofty scaffoldings, while the loggia and façade of San Vincenzo shone white in the pale, soft light.

The best time, however, to really enjoy the Piazza is in the early morning on a market day, when the life of the city is at its height ; when the cries of the vendors in the Piazza delle Erbe behind the Basilica mingle with the hawking of everything from shoe-strings to lemonade ; when the click of wooden soles on the smooth, stone pavement falls with pleasant rhythm upon the ear, as busy women, a wisp of thin, black lace thrown over their heads and tucked in at the neck on either side, as we may see it so often in early pictures, hasten along beneath the columns and arches towards the teeming hampers of richly-coloured, luscious fruits and vegetables, of which we catch a glimpse beyond the arcades of the Basilica. The sweet, soft dialect, so nearly allied to the Venetian, suggests Goldoni and his comedies, and we mourn the loss of the dainty costumes that belonged to all classes in those picturesque and festive days. The veil, worn as already described, would appear to be the only remnant of costume left, if we except the extraordinary black hats of the market-women, each ornamented by a bit of feather that looks as if it had seen strenuous service in a duster.

The country surrounding Vicenza being extremely fertile the market is well supplied with everything that is delicious in the way of vegetables, and plump and tempting in the way of poultry, while the fruit stalls,

daintily and tastefully arranged, make the mouth water. Then there is the bird-fancier, with poor little frightened birds in tiny cages, and blinking owls chained to tall poles, these destined to be used as decoys for catching smaller birds.

When the silk-worms have slept and fed for the third and last time, and been duly baked to death, the scene in the Piazza, and before the Basilica is indeed lively. Few cocoons are to be seen, the dealers bringing only a small bagful as samples, but the crush of buyers and sellers and the noise of their bargaining prove how much important business is being transacted.

Through the crowd busy housewives push their way hurrying to the fountain, the picturesque yoke over one shoulder from which hang twin kettles of shining copper. Dirty children, clad in one scant garment which is not always even sufficiently long, scuffle by in wooden-soled arrangements that have little in common with any known form of foot-gear, carrying home a jug of wine, a little heap of uninviting-looking meat in a cabbage leaf, or, if it be the season, a hot sweet-potato, which they call an *Americana* !

Beneath the Basilica the jewellers, whose predecessors have occupied the same row of shops since the days of Palladio (he built them especially for the goldsmiths' guild, with secret repositories at the back of each, and strong bars to their narrow windows) drive hard bargains with the loud-voiced country girls, praising the merits of long gilt chains and heavy ear pendants (made in Germany), upon which the maidens gaze with longing eyes.

But to return to the *Basilica*. It was Palladio's first great work. The Teatro Olimpico was his last.

No less than three successive halls of justice must have stood where Andrea's masterpiece now rises. Of these, two were destroyed by the fire and sword of invasion, while the third, a building of great beauty, had a still more pitiful fate. Completed in the year 1494, it stood in all its freshness and glory for two short years, and then one morning the Vicentines were startled from their slumbers by a deafening crash, to find that one-fourth of their hall of justice had collapsed, the slender, graceful columns of the lower order proving too weak to support the weight of the mass of masonry above. *Antonio Rizzo* was summoned from Venice to repair the damage and strengthen the rest of the edifice, the generous Republic of the Lagoons willingly appointing a large sum to be paid annually for ten years, at the end of which time Rizzo hoped to have accomplished his task. But war and internal discord soon interrupted the work, and when peace was at last restored Rizzo had disappeared—with ten thousand ducats belonging to the Most Serene Republic !

Spaventa then presented some satisfactory designs, and was commissioned to resume the interrupted labours of Rizzo ; but once more war threatened, and the League of Cambray kept Vicenza in a fever of apprehension and dread for the space of four years. In 1525 other parts of the Palazzo had begun to crack, many of the columns had swerved from the perpendicular, and the roof of the great hall threatened to collapse. Energetic measures were imperative, and *Antonio da Venezia* was summoned in haste to save,

if possible, what still remained of the beautiful edifice, while the Vicentines began to discuss the advisability of pulling it down and building anew from the very foundations.

Hearing of *Sansovino's* presence in Venice the Commune invited him to come to Vicenza and examine the ruin. This the master promised to do, but postponed his visit for a year, and all the knowledge we have of the result of his inspection is derived from a receipt for ten ducats paid him by the Commune "for travelling expenses."

The Veronese, *Sanmichele*, also gave an opinion, and finally, fifty years after Rizzo's flight, *Giulio Romano* was summoned to Vicenza. So charmed was he with the architecture of the Palazzo that he advised carrying out Spaventa's plan of "patching, piecing and propping," for he declared that nothing could be built more lovely than the then existing edifice. He remained a fortnight in Vicenza, and hardly had he taken his departure when *Palladio* came forward with two models—one of the Palazzo as it would appear after the execution of Spaventa's proposed restoration, the other of that child of his own genius, the present Basilica.

Much money had already been spent and the Commune was loth to accept the new and costly model, but the enthusiastic Vicentines clamoured for the execution of Palladio's design, and in 1549 he was authorized to begin his great work, which, though not completed until long after his death, was destined to stand through the centuries, testifying by its glory to the lofty genius of its creator, and to the munificence

and love of the beautiful of the citizens of Vicenza.

It is useless for me to attempt to describe such a structure—the guide-book does that, and fails utterly to convey any sense of its vastness, its airiness, its massive but never oppressive proportions ; and few will be interested to learn that the great Salon surrounded by the beautiful portico on the upper floor, has an area of 1,122 square metres, and is 26 metres high. If you mount the lovely external stair that leads to the portico above (and the view of the Piazza from this portico is very fine) you will see, near the top, a small iron safe let into the wall and surmounted by a head with yawning mouth. Above are carved the words : *Denonzie secrete in materie di sanità*. This inscription brings us face to face with all the horrors of pestilence and disease in those much-tried centuries before science had banished the fell spectre of contagion.

As to the style of the Basilica, it is Palladio's own—strictly classical, strictly pagan, inspired perhaps by the Theatre of Marcellus at Rome, but nevertheless original in its blending and mingling of one order with another ; his is a style that passes from Doric to Ionic and then melts into Corinthian ; that never wearies, never disappoints and is always magnificent, always majestic.

* * * * *

On the opposite side of the Piazza stands the *Loggia del Capitano*, another of Palladio's masterly creations.

The office of Capitano was established sometime during the thirteenth century and intended to act as a check upon the power of nobles and Podestà. The captain was elected bi-annually, and had full control

of the men-at-arms. His duty it was to preserve order in the city, and to look to her defence in case of attack or siege. He occupied the apartments above the Loggia and gave audience in the great hall whose windows overlook the Piazza.

A very ancient edifice once stood upon the site of the present Palazzo. What it was used for before the establishment of the office of Capitanio is not known, but in Palladio's day it was already in a ruinous condition. It consisted, like the present building, of a loggia with a spacious hall above, and had several times been restored, the last time by that Giovanni, Palladio's master, whom the contracts and receipts designate as a simple stone-cutter, but whom Vasari praises as a skilful architect, wood-carver and sculptor (in stucco). Behind the Palazzo stood a lofty medieval tower, built when nobles fortified even their town palaces. The upper part of this tower was demolished in 1813, but traces of its base are still visible at the side of the present building, in Contrada del Monte.

Great was the rejoicing in 1571 when the victory of Lepanto brought fresh glory to the Venetian states, and in commemoration of this event the people of Vicenza determined to erect a lasting monument. What could be more appropriate than a new and magnificent palace for the military governor, in place of the tottering edifice that then disfigured the square where the vast Basilica was nearing completion? Palladio supported the project with enthusiasm and set to work at once with all the ardour of patriot and artist combined. In order to harmonize with the tower that rose behind it the Palazzo must be austere both in line and

decoration, and composed largely of brick. The composite capitals of the four lofty brick columns that grace the façade, the balconies, cornice and upper balustrade, are of stone. Those who have seen the wall of the courtyard at the Accademia in Venice, built by Palladio in 1561 and recently restored, can judge of the beauty of the brick-work of that period, with which the Vicentine decorated his palace. That the surface is now rough and disfigured is owing partly to the tooth of time, and partly also to the fact that between 1760 and 1768, bad taste having prevailed in architecture as in all else, the Palazzo was pronounced too plain and severe, and the plasterers were ordered to "adorn" it inside and out. With the exception of those statues and bas-reliefs that refer to the battle of Lepanto, few of the figures and trophies that—fortunately—are fast crumbling away, were designed by Palladio's hand, but may rather be attributed to the so-called improvements that were made in the eighteenth century.

Under the Austrians the Palazzo became the seat of the military government, and General Thurn-Taxis sat in the hall above, while the beautiful loggia was converted into a guard-room.

The city has recently purchased the magnificent Palazzo Trissino-Baston, one of Scamozzi's masterpieces on the Corso, and connecting it with the Palazzo del Capitanio, has created a most spacious and splendid municipal building. The hall of the Palazzo, called Sala Bernardo, in memory of the Podestà who was in office at the time of its erection, has been enlarged and adapted to modern needs, and is now the council-

chamber, while the beautiful loggia forms a state entrance. The *Municipio* (entrance from the Corso) is well worth a visit, and conveys some idea of the splendour and magnificence of the private palaces of Vicenza. It also contains some good pictures by the Maganzas and others, and some fine wood-carving and stucco work.

* * * * *

Beyond the Palazzo del Capitanio and separated from it by the Contrada del Monte, stands the church of *San Vincenzo*, in the Monte di Pietà. The loggia above the open portico serves as a passage from one part of the Monte to the other, and is surmounted by an attic bearing a group representing the Virgin and the dead Christ (Pietà). The five statues above represent the patrons of Vicenza: Felice, Fortunato, Leonzio, Carpoforo and Vincenzo.

This church was founded in 1387, after the fall of the Scaligers, when Gian Galeazzo Visconti gave the site, which had formerly been occupied by fiscal offices. A citizen of Vicenza, Simone Serego, who had richly endowed the church, was interred in the splendid Gothic sarcophagus which still ornaments the portico of the temple, and a slab of red marble, standing upright against the wall opposite the central arch bears the date 1583, the local linear measures and the size and shape prescribed for Vicentine bricks and tiles. Brick making was a very flourishing and important branch of trade in the sixteenth century.

Albanese is supposed to have been the architect of the church of San Vincenzo, to whom a chapel had been previously dedicated in the Palazzo del Podestà that



Bart. Montagna

"MADONNA WITH THE HOLY CHILD AND TWO SAINTS"

(City Museum)

Photo Ed^{ne}. Alinari

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stood beyond the great tower. But it was no more than right that the patron should have a temple of his own, and as the Monte needed a church it was decided that it should be dedicated to St. Vincent.

The façade of the *Monte di Pietà* on the Piazza, which is now undergoing restoration, is of a very simple style of architecture, presenting broad smooth spaces, well adapted to the art of the fresco painter. Zelotti covered these spaces with paintings which received the highest praise from all the critics of the time, but owing either to the composition of the plaster or to the inferior quality of the colours used, they soon faded to such an extent that even in the seventeenth century they were fast disappearing. The work of re-decoration has been entrusted to Professor Bruschi of Rome, and we may hope soon to see its former beauty restored to the venerable façade.

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That charitable institution, Il Sacro Monte di Pietà that has its seat in this palace, was founded in 1486 by Blessed Marco di Montegallo, a friar of the Franciscan Order. Money was very scarce at that time, and a recent pestilence had weakened and impoverished the population. The Jews were lending at an exorbitant rate of interest, and it was in consequence of their unjust and cruel dealings that the people demanded their immediate expulsion from the city. The magistrates therefore took the necessary steps, and the Hebrews wandered forth to crowd the already overflowing Ghettos of neighbouring towns. But after this exodus Vicenza was, if anything, worse off than before,

for the Jews had naturally taken their riches with them, and money was now scarcer than ever. Blessed Marco, who happened to be preaching in the city at the time, was moved to pity by the great want and suffering of her inhabitants, and immediately set about founding a money-lending institution, such as already existed in many more important towns. With the help of the Commune and of generous citizens he soon succeeded in his undertaking and thus the Monte came into existence. Here, for any article of clothing or furniture they could spare, the poor could obtain a fair price, with the possibility of redeeming the object at any time within six months at the same figure and without interest. The institution was called *Sacro* because, as its statutes state, any deposit, however small *sacrum est*, and may neither be destroyed nor sold.

Wealthy Vicentines were lavish in their gifts to this great charity, and its capital soon began to swell rapidly. In 1494 a law was enacted binding all notaries when called upon to draw up a will, to put the question to the testator *se lasciar volesse qualche cosa al Monte*—if he be not desirous of bequeathing something to the Monte? The ecclesiastical authorities lent their full approval to this decree, and threatened such notaries as should wilfully omit or even forget to put the famous question, with excommunication and consequent eternal damnation!

Until the year 1515 money was lent only to the truly needy, but at that time the Pope sanctioned the taxation of deposits, and the institution was also authorized to advance money to the wealthy as well.

It became, in short, a species of benevolent banking house, and the term for redemption of deposits was lengthened to thirteen months.

The Monte now began to thrive, and much money was invested in houses and lands, which were let for nominal sums to needy burghers and peasants. At this time all fines, forfeits and confiscated properties were turned over to the Monte, which soon became the leading banking institution in the province. At the end of the eighteenth century it held in trust the greater part of the communal funds. In the year 1850 the amount paid out on deposits amounted to the handsome sum of seven million Venetian lire.

But the Sacro Monte di Pietà had its moments of trial as well as those of triumph and prosperity.

The Napoleonic régime in 1797 cost the bank five hundred and eighty thousand lire, and such was the scarcity of money that six per cent. was the rate of interest paid upon the loan that enabled the institution to continue its charitable operations. In 1802 the monetary conditions of Italy caused a loss of over three hundred thousand lire, and for some time the difficulties of administration were very great. But brighter days were in store for the Monte, and now, in spite of the enormous sums dispensed annually in various charities, its capital amounts to nearly two million francs. For deposits of a value less than three lire no interest is charged ; beyond that sum the rate of interest is six per cent. The annual income is divided into three equal parts ; the first is assigned to the capital of the institution, the second is distributed among the poor and the charitable institutions of

Vicenza, the third maintains a spacious and comfortable home for the aged of both sexes.

I have been at some pains to explain the constitution and business methods of the Monte di Pietà, because so many English and American travellers have a vague idea that this institution, found in so many continental cities, is a sort of glorified pawn-shop, authorized and protected by Government. I have indeed often found it difficult to persuade certain of my fellow-countrymen of the inaccuracy of this opinion, and to convince them that the Monte is not only a direct blessing to the needy, but one means, and indeed a most efficacious one, of limiting and checking the iniquitous operations of private money-lenders.

* * * * *

The entrance to the splendid *Biblioteca Bertoliana*, and to the Monte as well, is in the Via del Monte, leading from the Piazza to the Corso. It is a fine, massive piece of architecture, with splendid wrought-iron gratings to its three archways and to the windows above. It was erected in 1704 from designs by Antonio Muttoni. A Greek inscription—Medicine for the Soul—adorns the space above the windows, and the library contains no less than six hundred thousand volumes, many of them of great value. The learned librarian, Monsignor Bortolan and Don Sebastian Rumor, his able assistant, to both of whom I am deeply indebted for much aid and information, have written largely concerning things Vicentine, and are very willing to exhibit the treasures the Bertoliana contains. A little time spent among those shelves, groaning beneath the

weight of venerable and ponderous tomes, will delight all lovers of books and students of manuscripts.

In the year 1707 Count Giammaria Bertolo, dying in Venice, bequeathed his magnificent library, consisting of twelve thousand volumes, to his native city. The books were duly brought to Vicenza, and from this nucleus has sprung the public library, that bears the name of its generous founder. Giammaria Bertolo it was who, in 1669, built the Casino Valmarana on Monte Berico, and summoned Tiepolo from Venice to decorate its walls.

The Bertoliana contains many volumes from the presses of *Leonardo da Basilea*, who came to Vicenza from Bâle about the year 1473, and who, with other master-printers, produced annually as many books as were issued in Rome herself. There is an ancient work dealing with Amerigo Vespucci, printed in 1507, for which eight thousand francs were once refused; another treasure is a wonderful Bible written on parchment finer than the finest paper, beautifully illuminated and dating back to year 1200. This is considered the most perfect ancient codex in existence. A Divine Comedy, one of the first eight that saw the light, of course while Dante was still alive, occupies a post of honour, and beside it rests a first edition (1532) of the Orlando Furioso, with corrections and annotations by Ariosto himself. Besides these priceless treasures the library boasts no less than eleven hundred volumes printed between the year 1466 and 1510—the so-called *Incunabula*.

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The *Torre Maggiore* that soars above the Basilica

belonged in the twelfth century to the Bissari family. It was purchased by the Commune in 1226 and twice raised, once in 1311 and again in 1446, when it attained its present height of eighty-two metres, upon a base of only seven square metres. A severe earthquake that occurred in 1347 separated the tower from the Palace of Justice, leaving a yawning gap of over three feet. The city fathers, who were assembled in solemn conclave at the time, fled from the hall in a panic, many flinging themselves madly down the stairs, but the Torre Maggiore did not collapse.

It was adorned with a clock—the first in Vicenza—in the year 1377, and now a light has been placed upon the Basilica in such a manner as to illumine its dial, producing a strange and delightful effect on a dark night. Of the lion on the face towards the Piazza I shall speak later. The group beneath it, representing the Coronation of the Virgin by two angels, with St. Vincent and St. Stephen, is a monument to the piety and munificence of the Podestà Stefano Trevisan, who ruled the city in 1596.

A marble tablet at the base of the tower records the names of those Vicentines who fell during Italy's struggle for freedom from the Austrian yoke. One of the inscriptions on the side facing the Basilica is the publication of the sentence of banishment passed in 1698 upon a certain Andrea Boldù, who had stolen from the public coffers. His infamy has indeed pursued him through the centuries.

The tower on the market-place behind the Basilica was also part of a private fortification. It would appear to have been used by Ezzelino as a prison, and

in the days of Can Grande, as a repository for the city's archives. It was surrounded by a deep moat and by many shops. Burnt to the ground in the year 1509 by some criminals anxious to destroy the annals of their crimes, it was restored in modern times, and again used as a prison. A tablet bearing an inscription composed by Antonio Fogazzaro commemorates the memory of Federico Confalonieri, the Italian patriot and martyr, who spent a night here in chains, on his way to the Austrian fortress of Spielberg.

A most graceful arch and loggia now joins the tower to the Basilica.

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The *twin columns* that so proudly dominate the Piazza dei Signori, were erected at different periods. In 1406, the Vicentines having accepted the domination of the Venetian Republic, the lion of St. Mark was raised to the striking position upon the Torre Maggiore which it still occupies. But the city felt the need of some more imposing monument to commemorate her incorporation, and it was decided that a lofty column, to be quarried at Chiampo, should be raised in the Piazza, and bear the proud lion of the Republic. It was with much difficulty that the transport from the quarry was effected. Fifteen yoke of oxen and no less than two hundred men were engaged in this undertaking, but the monster was landed in the Piazza at last, where it remained prostrate for seventeen years. It was raised in 1464, but not until 1473 was it crowned with the lion, that Formenton—a predecessor of Palladio and an architect of great merit—placed in position, and caused to be richly gilded, together with

the capital of the column. This first lion remained in place until the year 1509 when Trissino, aided by many of the nobles and by his own large clan, succeeded in taking possession of the city in the Emperor's name, after the defeat of the Venetians at Agnadello, during the Republic's terrible struggle against the League of Cambray.

An order soon arrived from the Emperor for the lion to be removed from the tower, whereupon the citizens rose in a body and attempted to defend the beloved emblem. But although blood was shed, and one man nearly lost his life, the Imperialists prevailed, and the lion was not only torn from his proud post, but broken into small pieces. Some gentlemen of Cremona, happening to pass through Vicenza on that unhappy day, picked up a fragment of the demolished statue and took it with them as a memento. On reaching one of the suburbs of the city they unwisely exhibited the trophy and uttered some ribald jests and cruel taunts concerning the defeat of the Vicentines. His indiscretion cost one of the travellers his life, while the others were allowed to depart only after having received most barbarous treatment at the hands of the enraged populace.

The imperial eagle soon made his appearance upon the column, but before the close of the year both Germans and eagle had taken flight, and Venice once more held sway in Vicenza. The proud and victorious standard of St. Mark was quickly set up upon the monument, and waved there for eleven years, until 1520, when Venice made the city a present of a new lion.

In 1797 Vicenza felt the wave of revolution that

swept across Europe, and the temporary government, desirous of flaunting its defiance of all masters, ordered the removal of the arms of St. Mark from public buildings. The poor lion was again obliged to descend from his column, but this time he was treated more gently, and deposited uninjured in the municipal lumber-room.

During the Austrian rule the imperial eagle never succeeded to this lofty perch and the column remained unoccupied until 1863 when the masters, whose position was beginning to become precarious, being anxious to propitiate the Vicentines, issued an order that the venerable lion be brought forth, thoroughly dusted, and restored to his throne.

As to the *Colonna del Redentore*, it was quarried at the same time as the other, but either because it was somewhat smaller in circumference, or for some other reason unknown, it was never removed to Vicenza, and came, in time, to be forgotten. In 1627 the Podestà Emo had occasion to go to Chiampo, and there in the quarry he beheld the prostrate column. Fired with a desire to see it placed beside its mate he prevailed upon the city to order its removal, but when an attempt was made to move the monster it cracked into several pieces. The Venetian "Council of the One Hundred and Fifty" was then appealed to, and with their generous aid a new column was quarried and brought to Vicenza, the entire population of town and country turning out to aid in its removal. It had originally been intended that the second column should bear the statues of the saints Fortunato and Felice, or that of St. Vincent, but meanwhile the church of San Vincenzo having come into existence, it was decided to

dedicate this new monument to the Redeemer. The statue that surmounts it was sculptured in the year 1646 by Giovanni Battista Albanese.

Two buildings were demolished to make room for the columns, one in 1462, the other in 1482. The first was the headquarters of the leather, grain and flour merchants, while the second, a strongly fortified edifice—contained that precious commodity, salt.

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Below the twin columns, and facing the Piazza, is the church of *Santa Maria dei Servi*, which contains several interesting pictures, besides being surrounded by a charming tradition which modern historians are doing their best to demolish. It is indeed a pity to strip away all the poetry and romance that has been handed down through so many generations, and really in the end it makes so little difference to history, and so much difference to our enjoyment of things ! This tradition, which contains nothing of a miraculous nature, concerns the founding of the church, and runs as follows.

When Vicenza was attacked by Carrara lord of Padua in 1314, and the Borgo di San Pietro subjected to sack and rapine of the most horrible description, Antonio Nogarola, the worthy Podestà, having done all in his power to save the city, and well aware that she would soon be forced to yield, despatched couriers post-haste to Verona to apprise Can Grande della Scala of the danger that threatened, of the fear and misery that distracted his loyal subjects, and of the mortal wounds that had laid low his valiant captain and beloved friend, Pietro Braimonte. The prince was in the act of washing his hands before repairing to the banquet-

ing hall when the weary messengers arrived. "A cup of wine," he cried, "and bring forth my swiftest steed." Having ordered his captains to assemble their troops and follow him without delay, he set forth on his mad ride, in the company of two-hundred cavaliers, whom he soon left far behind. Changing horses but once, he covered the distance between the two cities in the remarkably short space of four hours, and entered Vicenza alone, three of his escort arriving soon after. The sight of their beloved lord spurred the Vicentines to fresh effort, and placing himself at the head of the little band that soon gathered around him, Can Grande bared his head and uttered these solemn words: "Mary, Mother of God, whom I honour by fasting twice in every week, lend me thy support if I be worthy to receive it. If not, this day shall be my last!" Hereupon the Vicentines, through their Podestà, vowed to erect a church in honour of the Virgin, and this in the very heart of the city, should she deliver them from their enemies. Confident and rejoicing they fell upon the Paduans, whom they found totally unprepared to resist their attack, for their leaders, believing Can Grande to be ill and far away in Verona, had allowed their troops to disband and give themselves up to feasting and revelry. Many were asleep, utterly exhausted after the orgies of the previous night; others were still feasting and making merry at the expense of the unhappy inhabitants of Borgo. The encounter was short but bloody. The Paduans, completely routed, fled in all directions, some hiding in cellars or stables, others behind hedges or in hollow trees, while many perished in the waters of Bacchiglione, which in

their mad terror they had attempted to swim. While the Scaliger and his troops pursued the main body of Paduans, the women of Vicenza hunted out and destroyed all those who were in hiding, and fierce mastiffs were let loose in the forests and marshlands. The bloody chase lasted for three days, and so great was the slaughter that it is said the waters of Bacchiglione flowed past Padua tinged with blood. In the ninth canto of the *Paradiso*, Dante makes Cunizza, sister of Ezzelino III, predict the event in the following words :

. . . e, pria che muoia,
 Questo centesim' anno ancor s'incinqua.
 Vedi se far si de' l'uomo eccellente,
 Sì ch'altra vita la prima relinqua !
 E ciò non pensa la turba presente,
 Che Tagliamento ed Adice richiude,
 Nè, per esser battuta, ancor si pente.
 Ma tosto fia che Padova al palude
 Cangerà l'acqua che Vicenza bagna,
 Per essere al dover le genti crude.¹

The triumphant Vicentines on their return to the delivered city joined in solemn thanksgiving to the Blessed Virgin, and, faithful to their vow, built the church of Santa Maria in Foro (in the Forum), or,

¹ "This jewel, that is next me in our heaven,
 Lustrous and costly, great renown hath left,
 And not to perish, ere these hundred years
 Five times absolve their round. Consider thou
 If to excel be worthy man's endeavour,
 When such life may attend the first. Yet they
 Care not for this, the crowd that now are girt
 By Adice and Tagliamento, still
 Impenitent, though scourged. The hour is near
 When for their stubbornness at Padua's marsh
 The water shall be changed that laves Vicenza."

Cary's Translation.

as it came in time to be called, de' Servi, in reference to the monks who dwelt in its monastery.

Such is the tradition. Whether the founding took place in 1314 or in 1407, as many would have it, matters little to us, and the incident is too picturesque to be cast aside.

The eighteenth century façade of Santa Maria de' Servi is Barocco of the worst description, but the hand of the later restorer has fortunately spared its splendid portal. This dates from the year 1531 and is a successful and effective blending of the Lombard and Italian Gothic. Perhaps by that mysterious Mistro Giovanni, reputed the master of Palladio. The wrought-iron gratings of the two windows above the smaller door are also exceptionally fine.

The interior of the church is Italian Gothic, and, save for two altar-pieces (first on either side of main entrance) by *Maganza*, and a fine stone altar (second on the left) in the late Lombard style, contains little to interest the visitor. But the cloister, which is reached through a low, richly-sculptured door on the right, is picturesque in the extreme, and will amply repay a few moments' attention. It was adorned with frescoes by *Damini* in 1592, the artist being but eighteen years of age at the time. Of these works few traces remain, but the lovely proportions of the cloister, surmounted by its spacious loggia, are pleasing and graceful, and many of the ancient columns are beautifully wrought and lovely in design.

CHAPTER IV

A WALK TO SANTA CHIARA

VICENZA being a compact town, the distances are not great, and there is always a shady side to the usually narrow street. Many and delightful are the walks to be taken, and an especially pleasant and interesting one leads from the church of Santa Maria de' Servi to *Ponte San Michele*, rebuilt in 1628 as a single arch, more or less upon the lines of Rialto in Venice, whence a charming view of the river Retrone is obtained.

Continuing down Contrada San Michele, past the sixteenth-century church of *San Nicola* (its heavy gaudy interior an excellent example of the Barocco) Piazzetta de' Gualdi is soon reached. It contains two fine palaces, one the Casino Gualdi, erected in or about the year 1499, in the Lombard style, the other Palazzo Sessi, in the Renaissance manner, with a base of *diamante*. This edifice is an example of amateur workmanship, for Count Stefano was his own architect in 1537.

The famous Roman theatre, Berga, is believed to have occupied the site of these and neighbouring constructions, and remains that are unquestionably of Roman origin are frequently being brought to light in this district.

But something better than the heavy, ornate, pretentious architecture of Piazzetta de' Gualdi is in store for those who follow Contrada Santa Chiara and, on reaching the house that bears the number seventeen, pass beneath its low portal and enter the courtyard beyond. There, with the music of hammer and anvil ringing in his ears—for there is a smithy near at hand—the visitor may stand and admire that dilapidated but still fascinating gem, the church of *Santa Chiara*.

Built in 1451 in honour of San Bernardino da Siena, a Franciscan whom Pope Nicholas V had recently canonized, it later took the name of Clare, the third great Franciscan saint, whose order dwelt in the adjacent convent.

This picturesque octagonal edifice of brick, from which the plaster has long since crumbled, seems to smile whimsically at the astonishment of the beholder, who passing from the noisy dirty street, beneath the unpretentious doorway of a humble dwelling, suddenly finds himself face to face with so much calm and tender beauty. Beneath the graceful arch of its marble portal stands a statue of holy Bernardino, his lips parted as if about to utter burning words such as so often rang through the lofty aisles and vaulted chapels of Siena's cathedral. The church rests upon a granite base, that glows with a warm pink tinge as the sun brings out all the rich colour of the bricks above. There is no ornamentation save a narrow frieze of wrought stone beneath the eaves, but the walls were once glorious with rare examples of the fresco-painter's art. That the chapel in the monastery, where

the Little Sisters of the Poor now have a school, was also covered with frescoes, has been satisfactorily established, several fragments of interesting workmanship having been successfully freed from plaster and whitewash. They are of a very early date—probably of the Speranza and Verla period—which would suggest that the chapel was decorated immediately upon completion. The church itself has been despoiled of its art treasures—it once contained a Bassano and two canvases by Carlino Caliarì, son of Paolo Veronese—and now possesses no objects of interest to the visitor. Three fine tombstones of ancient date have been fixed to the wall in the courtyard near the smithy, and are worthy of notice.

Contrada Santa Chiara soon becomes Contrada Santa Caterina, containing the church dedicated to the last-named saint, which is of no interest to us except that in early days its monastery was one of those where monks and nuns dwelt together. Presently Porta Monte is reached, beyond which rises the *L'Arco delle Scalette*, thus named because of its position at the foot of a flight of two hundred steps leading to the top of Monte Berico.

This arch was erected in 1595, as the inscription tells us, and is Palladian in style. The two statues that fill the internal niches are by Marinali, those that rise on either side of the splendid lion are of the school of Albanese. *L'Arco delle Scalette* might well have been a triumphal arch of ancient Rome, so imposing is it and on so majestic a scale.

Retracing our steps as far as Piazzetta de' Gualdi, we cross it and enter Contrada de' Santi Apostoli.



Bart Montagna

“MADONNA WORSHIPPING THE INFANT CHRIST”

(City Museum)

Photo Edne Alinari

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Number thirty of this interesting street is a charming Gothic edifice with low arched portal. Number twenty-one, on the opposite side, was once Palazzo Fabris, and is now a public school for girls. Its style is a pleasing mingling of Gothic and Lombard ; a broad window, composed of three arches separated by slender, fluted columns with Corinthian capitals, adorn the rich façade, a creation of the fifteenth century.

Palazzo Sette-Gnoato, a Brunellesque building of the early eighteenth century, was the head-quarters of the chief of police in Austrian times, and Vicenza's venerable patriots still remember with what sinking hearts in those dark and hopeless days they or their fathers mounted its stairs in obedience to a summons from the much feared chief. How many of them, alas, were destined to pass thence to long and cruel imprisonment, some even to death itself !

A few steps bring us to *Ponte San Paolo*, formerly known as *Ponte Berga*, which Palladio believed to be of Roman origin. Beyond lies *Piazza delle Erbe*, at the foot of the lovely *Basilica* and of the lofty *Torrione delle Prigione*.

CHAPTER V

SANTO STEFANO—SAN ROCCO—SAN LORENZO

SANTO STEFANO, not far from San Giacomo, was also one of the seven chapels of early days, and official documents still exist in which it is mentioned as early as the year 1156. It was restored beyond all recognition in 1675, and is now an ornate example of Renaissance distortion.

It was in this church that the citizens reluctantly swore allegiance to Austria in 1815.

Several fine pictures still grace the walls and altars of Santo Stefano—first among these being the Madonna by Palma Vecchio—but it will be wiser to take the works in order, beginning with the *Maffei* above the main entrance, which represents San Gaetano healing the sick.

The figures are all clad in the black robes of the Teatini order, and the interior which forms the background of the scene is dark and indistinct, the only dash of light and colour being lent by a piece of red drapery that envelopes the sick man, and by the white sheet upon which he rests. But so clever is the handling of light and shade that in spite of all this darkness the picture is warm in tone and luminous. Maffei always introduced much minium into his works, and the warm reddish tinge which resulted is distinctly pleasing.

The angels playing on various instruments, on either side of the door, once formed part of a canopy over the high altar. They are delightfully naïve and dignified, and are the work of *Alessandro Maganza*.

The Stoning of St. Stephen and the Baptism of Christ, to right and left within the apse, are also the fruit of *Alessandro's* genius. The figure of Stephen is well posed and skilfully drawn, the expression holy and ecstatic, while the colour scheme of the picture is rich. The Christ of the Baptism, nude save for a loin-cloth, stands with bowed head and clasped hands, waiting to receive the purifying waters which the Baptist is about to pour over Him from his upraised cup. The Saviour is absorbed in prayer and adoration, and is oblivious to the apparition that has arrested the hand of John. The clouds have parted, revealing the Almighty; the snow-white dove is winging earthwards. The composition is simple in the extreme, but the canvas palpitates with awe and reverence.

On either side of the high altar hang two large pictures. The one on the left, by *Maganza*, is so greatly discoloured that it is almost entirely obliterated. The other, representing the death of San Gaetano Thiene, is by *Maffei*. Here the figures of the picture above the main entrance are repeated, and show the artist as a clever portraitist. The influence of the Venetian school is very apparent in the magnificence, breadth, and pomp of composition. When the sun lights up this picture in the late afternoon, the effect is surprising indeed.

And now I stand before the crowning gem of Santo Stefano—*Palma Vecchio's* splendid *Madonna*. Jacopo,

who had such true understanding of feminine beauty, who knew the flesh of woman better than any of his predecessors or contemporaries, has depicted a white-skinned youthful Mother of surpassing loveliness, holding in her arms the sweetest and softest of tender naked infants. The tiny limbs are exquisitely modelled, the chestnut curls form a halo about the baby face, the pink right hand is raised in blessing. Santa Lucia is a lovely womanly figure with rippling golden hair. St. George might well be by Veronese himself, so martial, so commanding is his attitude. The angel seated at the feet of the Virgin, and playing upon a species of psaltery, is lovely beyond description, and the rich and mellow tones of the flowing draperies blend and mingle in a warm and glorious whole. The flesh of the Mother, of the Child and of Santa Lucia, the of a soft and tender delicacy; the sun-browned skin of the warrior glows warmly against the cold glitter of his armour; the figures live and breathe, and a blessing seems indeed to descend upon us from the darling baby hand. The spirit of religion is in the picture, and the contemplation of it must bring peace and rest and calm repose to the troubled spirit.

The canvas containing a representation of Blessed Andrea Avellino with angels, in the second chapel on the left, is a skilful and finished work by Alessandro Maganza.

On the right wall of the following chapel is a St. Paul by Tintoretto, which once occupied a place of honour upon the altar. It was removed to make room for the self-righteous female saint now enthroned there, and unfortunately now hangs in such a position

as never to receive a really good light, in which it might be carefully studied.

SAN ROCCO.

This church lies out of the way, in one of the poorer and more crowded quarters of Vicenza, but a visit to it will certainly prove delightful, and should it happen to be closed, the little, snuffy, old cobbler who sits at work hard by will gladly produce the key, and admit the "Signori."

Built in 1485, while a terrible pestilence was raging, this temple was dedicated to San Rocco, the patron of those suffering from pest. The severe lines of its lofty façade are pleasing and dignified, but the austere Gothic of its interior is uninteresting, and the unusual position of the choir-loft, which runs across the middle of the church, conveys a sense of crowding and makeshift.

The first altar on the left contains one of *Giovanni Battista Zelotti's* best works—*St. Helena Finding the Cross*. The dramatic nature of the tradition was well adapted to appeal to Zelotti's vivid imagination and love of grandeur and elaboration. The story is, that when Helena caused search to be made for the cross of Our Lord, the crosses of the two thieves were also brought to light. Which, then, was the one that had borne the precious burden? A funeral procession happening to pass at that moment of doubt, the mother of Constantine, inspired by her perfect faith, begged that the body be laid upon each cross in turn. Hardly had the cold limbs pressed the wood on which

the Saviour had suffered, when a shudder passed through the dead man's members, a warm glow suffused his flesh, his eyes opened, and, pronouncing the name of Jesus, he rose to his feet.

The picture represents the moment of the miracle. A crowd has assembled within the ruins of a splendid pagan temple ; columns, arches and niches containing statues of gods and goddesses form an imposing setting to the scene that is being enacted. Upon the Cross the dead man is thrilling back to life once more. His bearers start back in terror and amazement ; Helena, at once the Empress and the Saint, stands with up-raised hands, a prayer of thanksgiving upon her lips. The crowd presses forward to obtain a better view ; people have mounted the steps of the temple ; an aged man has climbed upon the pedestal of a lofty column ; all are watching the consummation of the miracle with breathless awe and in deepest silence.

The composition is skilful, the drawing admirable, the sense of beauty everywhere apparent. How charming are the fair-haired mother and her pretty baby on the right, and the two female figures behind the Empress ! How lovely is the combination of gold and pinkish lavender that forms the saint's drapery, and how graceful is the statue of Venus with the winged Cupid in the niche beyond ! A pity it is indeed that time has dimmed the once brilliant glory of this masterpiece, this majestic monument to the genius of Giovanni Battista Zelotti !

The second altar contains a canvas representing the decapitation of St. Catherine in the presence of the tyrant, by *Alessandro Moretto* of Brescia. The

figures are flat, motionless and unnatural, but the architectural portions of the picture are admirable.

The lovely Gothic altar that follows contains one of those quaint groups in painted stone or wood—this one is in wood—so often found both in Vicenza and throughout the province.

Above the high altar is the most precious of the temple's treasures, the *Madonna* by *Buonconsiglio*, executed and signed in the year 1502.

With that utter and exasperating ignorance of the truly beautiful that is, unfortunately, so often met with in those who have the care of our churches, a hideous arrangement of white silk has been perched upon the already lofty tabernacle, and this is flanked by tall candles and great bunches of dusty paper flowers. Thus the masterpiece behind is most successfully and completely hidden. However, by climbing upon a chair, or creeping into the corner beside the gaudy altar, a view may be obtained of the lovely Lady seated upon the throne with her Baby resting on her knee, and clasping in one tiny hand a cluster of red cherries. Beneath this central group stand, on the right, St. Sebastian and St. Domenic, two beautifully-posed and cleverly-drawn figures, the anatomy of the naked Sebastian being especially fine. On the left are Peter and Paul, undoubtedly portraits of two gentlemen of Vicenza of Buonconsiglio's day.

The influence of the Bellini and of the Venetian school in general is very apparent in the pose of Madonna and Child, in the arrangement of draperies, and in the style of the architecture that surrounds the throne, itself the marble pedestal of a pagan altar,

and ornamented at the base with the garlands and skulls of the sacrifice. The portico beneath which the Virgin sits enthroned is incrustated with Venetian mosaics, and the carpet at her feet is a product of the looms of the East. A lamp is suspended above the group, while a cord and ring for lowering it hang upon the left. The composition is calm and full of restful quiet, but it is rather the spirit of modernity than the spirit of religion that pervades and animates the canvas. Buonconsiglio, the greatest light of Vicenza's school, was eminently modern even in those early days.

Of the two large oil paintings on either hand little can be said, for little can be seen. They are by Alessandro Maganza, and we know that they were considered masterpieces in their day.

Above the second altar on the right of the main entrance is a charming *Adoration of the Magi* by *Agostino Bresciano* (1559). The architecture and perspective are excellent, and some of the figures are so strong and realistic as to suggest the brush of Veronese himself. The Madonna and Child, however, seem hardly by the same firm hand that executed the Magi. The group is pleasing, but too dainty, too highly coloured, to harmonize with the broad drawing and rich low tones of the other figures.

In the small sacristy is an altar-piece of the early fourteenth century which is worthy of notice. Perched well out of sight, above a door—but the amiable sacristan will take it down—it is a gem of a Byzantine Madonna on wood.

SAN LORENZO.

Of the church of San Lorenzo, a most pleasing Gothic monument, I am unable to speak at length, as it is at present surrounded by a high fence of boards, behind which it is impossible to penetrate, while the ceaseless click of the stone-cutter's chisel proves how the work of restoration is being hastened. From the opposite side of the street a view may be obtained of the yawning cracks that disfigure the flank of the temple and that have made its complete and speedy restoration an absolute necessity. It seems almost impossible that such serious damage can ever be repaired and the construction made perfect once more, but the valiant architects who have undertaken the difficult and delicate task express confidence in the ultimate satisfactory result of their labours, which, however, bid fair to be of long duration.

The church of San Lorenzo was founded in the year 1280 by the Frati Minori—a branch of the Franciscan Order—a small chapel dedicated to Saint Francis, and served by secular priests having previously existed upon the same site. Several noble families of Vicenza contributed generously towards the expenses of the construction, but the greater part of the necessary funds was the result of fines extorted from “schismatics, heretics and usurers.” The wholly approving Castellini goes on to state that “about that time the Office of the Inquisition was introduced by the Friars of the same order (Minori), the first inquisitor being a certain Fra Bartolommeo da Padova, who was authorized to proceed against all such as were not in sympathy with the Catholic Church. Therefore, having

in course of time, condemned many, he decreed that their treasures be used in the building of this temple, which was completed within the space of six-and-thirty years."

In 1796 San Lorenzo became a military hospital, and later a storehouse for hay and straw. In 1835, having been purchased by the commune, it was once more restored to its original sacred purposes.

The façade of time-stained brick is ornamented with much terra-cotta of admirable workmanship. The broad ledge projecting above the main portal was once protected by a balustrade, and it was the custom of the Friars to harangue from this lofty pulpit the attentive and submissive crowd in the square below.

The beautiful Gothic portal of finest marble was erected in 1344 at the expense of Cavaliere Pietro Marano, called *Il Nano*, or the Dwarf, its architect being one of the friars, as had been the case with the church itself. Upon the plinth at the base of the column on the right is a quaint inscription in the language of the fourteenth century, to the effect that a certain Bozzo, having broken the paw of the lion beneath, was refused admittance to the temple until he had repaired the injury. The richness of its ornamentation, the delicacy of its workmanship, and the exquisite harmony of all its parts, combine to place this portal among the greatest masterpieces of Gothic art. At the left of the Madonna in the group above the door kneels Pietro da Marano—the Dwarf—who in his day was no less a personage than the counsellor and friend of Cangrande, of Alberto and of Mastino della Scala.

In one of the four great tombs to right and left of the main portal rest the bones of Pietro's brother, Marco, who died in 1312; another holds the ashes of Lapo di Azzolino degli Uberti, like Dante an exile from his native Florence.

The church contains many tombs and monuments erected to the memory of the illustrious who have died within the city's walls. Ferreto dei Ferreti, poet and historian, lies here; Bartolommeo Montagna's body was borne across from his house opposite and laid to rest amidst the beauty of the temple with which he was so familiar, and which his brush had helped to adorn. Giangiorgio Trissino the poet, of whom Vicenza is so justly proud, Blessed Bartolommeo da Braganze, Scamozzi, Ippolito Porto, who fought under Charles V, and many others beside, have all been honoured with monuments in San Lorenzo, where fitting inscriptions record their talents and extol their virtues and deeds of valour.

Several fine Gothic altars grace this temple, while numerous canvases and panels by Mantegna and his pupil Montagna, by Palma Giovane and Maganza, that should look down from its venerable walls, now languish in dark and crowded imprisonment, awaiting the happy morn that shall restore them to their posts of honour.

The church through whose broad and sounding aisles the voice of Blessed Bernardino da Feltre once rang in earnest exhortation, the temple in which that other Bernardino—Siena's great saint—made his fervent appeals to the higher nature of a people sunk in ignorance and superstition, now resounds with the

ring of the hammer, the grating of the saw and the click of the chisel, while, instead of the glorious music of the Mass, snatches from the opera or the latest music-hall melodies now awaken the echoes of the dismantled and dust-enshrouded chapels.

CHAPTER VI

SANTA CORONA

THIS beautiful church, situated in a quiet sunny street, and surrounded by gardens and magnificent palaces, is perhaps, after the Museo Civico, the best and certainly the most delightful place in which to study the Vicentine school of painting, containing as it does examples of so many of the masters, their works still adorning the walls or altars for which they were originally painted.

Before entering, let me pause in the shade opposite the charming façade of brick ornamented by an admirable rose-window and a marble group representing the Crowning with Thorns, and recall the story of the foundation of this church, the first in the world to be dedicated to the Holy Crown.

Bartolommeo Breganze, a friar of the order of St. Domenic, was a man of singular virtues and great wisdom. The fame of his sanctity reaching the Pontiff's ears, he was summoned to Rome, and appointed Bishop of Cyprus in the year 1248. He was, however, soon forced to withdraw from the island, being unable to maintain his position there owing to dissensions between Greeks and Roman Catholics, and presently returned to Rome. Promoted to the see of Vicenza, he repaired thither, but found the gates of the city closed against him, Ezzelino da Romano,

who was under the ban of the Church, having summoned an heretical bishop to exercise the episcopal authority. Bartolommeo lived for some time as an outlaw, many citizens who refused to recognize the heretic joining him in his exile.

Alexander IV soon summoned him to his court once more, and made him papal legate to England, where he was well received, and at once gained the love and respect of all who came in contact with him. His mission in England accomplished, the holy man started homewards, accepting, on his way, a pressing invitation from Louis IX to visit him in Paris. The two men became fast friends, and Bartolommeo being as loth to depart as was the saintly king to speed him on his way, the visit became a lengthy one. At last, however, the day of parting being finally established, Louis determined to present his friend with two precious tokens of his affection and esteem. Having embraced him tenderly, the King placed in the Bishop's hands a richly-chiselled casket, and threw about his shoulders his own royal mantle, heavy with embroideries in purest gold and silver. The casket contained a piece of the wood of the Cross and a single thorn from Our Saviour's crown, holy relics which Louis himself had brought from the Orient. The splendid cloak he deemed none too good to enfold the bearer of a burden so precious as that which Bartolommeo was to carry with him into Italy.

The legend concerning the preservation of the Crown of Thorns is so beautiful that I cannot resist setting it down here for the benefit of those who may be unfamiliar with it.

It is said that Joseph of Arimathea, having removed the cruel crown from the bleeding head of his beloved Master, hid it in a crevice in a rock near the tomb until such a time as he should be able to return and transfer it to his own house. On the night following the Resurrection he repaired to the tomb, and a bright light shining forth from the rock guided him to the spot where the precious relic lay concealed. Hiding it in his bosom he hastened homewards, and placed his treasure in a casket which had already been prepared for its reception. A small lamp was kept burning day and night before the casket, and this lamp, although its wick was of the smallest and its daily supply of oil no more than would fill an egg-shell, gave forth a light so strong as to illuminate the whole house, and filled all beholders with awe and wonder. The crown is said to have passed, in later days, from the descendants of Joseph to the Emperor of the Orient, who carried it to Constantinople. St. Louis, receiving two thorns as a gift from the Sultan, bestowed one upon Bartolommeo Breganze, and deposited the other at the Sainte Chapelle in Paris.

The Bishop reached Vicenza in 1260, some months after the death of Ezzelino, and the entire population of the city, freed at last from the cruel yoke of the bloodthirsty tyrant who had so long oppressed her, trooped forth to welcome the returning exile. Decked in full canonicals and bearing the precious casket in his arms, Bartolommeo appeared mounted upon a milk-white steed, at the head of a long procession of priests and monks. Amidst the clanging of bells, the shouts of joy of the populace and the hymns of

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thanksgiving of the clergy, he entered the city and rode to the monastery of the Preaching Friars, which then occupied the site of Santa Corona. The wood of the Cross was given to the Cathedral, where it is still preserved. The Thorn was deposited in the small oratory of the Preachers, and the royal mantle, transformed into a magnificent cope, still forms one of the treasures of Santa Corona.

Bartolommeo at once set about purging the city of the heresy that had gained a strong foothold throughout the province. In this endeavour he was so successful that at the end of three years the evil was entirely extirpated.

He then turned his attention towards the building of a church in which his beloved relic might find a worthy resting-place for all time. Such was the zeal of Vicenza for the success of this undertaking that not only did the Commune give large sums towards the expenses of the building but noble families who dwelt in the neighbourhood of the site chosen, gave their palaces and gardens, that the new church and monastery might not be crowded. The palaces were demolished, and in 1265 Bartolommeo Breganze laid the corner stone of Santa Corona.

Only five years later the saintly prelate, the eloquent preacher, the clever diplomatist and learned theologian was called to his rest, and his body was entombed beneath the high-altar of his church. In due time his name was enrolled amongst those of the blessed, and to this day the memory of Bishop Bartolommeo is green in the city he loved.

For centuries the Dominicans lived and prayed in



Buonconsiglio

“THE ENTOMBMENT”
(City Museum)

the monastery which the holy bishop had provided for them, receiving and caring for the pilgrims who flocked from all quarters to pay homage to the sacred Thorn, which is still preserved in a silver reliquary, a splendid specimen of the jeweller's art of the fourteenth century, in the chapel on the left of the choir, and displayed to the faithful on certain solemn occasions.

Pushing aside the heavy curtain I find myself within the venerable edifice. Its proportions are fine, its style Gothic, and a sense of peace and of calm devotion greets me on the threshold. Here indeed is a place to pray in, to think in; a spot exquisitely adapted to introspection; where the very atmosphere is laden with the worship and adoration of centuries; where the mystic silence is unbroken save by the singing of many birds in a neighbouring garden.

The little old sexton, dim-eyed and toothless, comes shuffling forwards, tugging at a straggling forelock in sign of respectful salutation; but recognizing a frequent visitor, he leaves me to wander at will, begging that I will summon him should I desire any information. But alas, I tried him long ago, in the days of my ignorance, and found him sadly wanting, for the information he so eagerly imparted was all too often at variance with the facts I have since gleaned from dusty tomes and ancient chronicles!

On the left of the main door is a fragment of fresco which serves to illustrate the former glory of the church, when its walls were covered with such work as this. Even in the days of Boschini—a poor artist, but an excellent critic who visited Santa Corona in 1676—

this fresco stood alone. He is unable to name its author, but justly observes that its execution and composition savour of the school of Titian. Some modern authorities have attributed it to Verla, others to Speranza, who, working as they did, in the fifteenth century, could hardly have felt the influence of the great Venetian. In Verla, as in the other early masters of the Vicentine school, we have that simplicity of composition and truth of expression that so charm us in the early Florentines. But two or more centuries having elapsed since Cimabue and Giotto wrought their masterpieces, the drawing is here improved, and, above all, perspective and background are carried to a high degree of perfection. The Vicentine painters, swayed perhaps by the same occult influence that later produced Palladio and his followers, had a sense of proportion, of distance and of ornamentation such as few others have possessed, and even Speranza gives us, in a crucifixion in the refectory of a former Dominican convent (now an orphan asylum), a sense of peace and atmosphere such as we experience before that glorious work of Perugino's in Santa Maria dei Pazzi at Florence.

But to return to Verla's—or Speranza's—fresco. The Madonna, her dark mantle wide-spread as a symbol of gracious protection, looks smilingly down upon a group of worshippers at her feet. True devotion emanates from the figure of the old man on the right, while the matron on the left appears conscious of her conspicuous position, and preoccupied by considerations of a worldly nature. The perspective is good, and the handling of the tiny figures on an elevation in the back-

ground, proves the sense of proportion to be most accurate.

Beside the first altar on the left is an angel in fresco, this also attributed by Boschini to the primitive Verla. In the critic's time it was in the same state of isolation as to-day, and I cry anathema upon the ugly barocco pilaster that has usurped the spot once occupied by the Madonna who should be listening to this angel's triumphant annunciation of the coming of Our Lord. We have not yet reached the age when all angels must of necessity be fair-haired and curly, and here we have a sweet and reverent countenance surrounded by chestnut tresses, that flow smoothly downwards, and nestle in the bare, soft neck. The drawing of the arm is certainly defective, but the upraised hand is beautiful in its strong, firm outline.

And now I stand before the majestic *Magdalen* by *Bartolommeo Montagna*, and a wave of delight sweeps over me as I feast my eyes on the magnificent colour-scheme.

Upon a low marble throne stands the beauteous *Magdalen*, clasping her rich, red mantle with one hand, while in the other she holds her precious vase. This glorious being, with her wealth of light and rippling tresses, her calm, serene brow, her softly moulded cheeks and sweet, kiss-inviting lips, is no crushed and broken penitent, but the saint, who has passed through fire and come forth purified, majestic, triumphant. In golden corslet and velvet, ermine-bordered mantle, she stands before me, and I am in the presence of a queen. The four saints below are of masterly execution, the faces of the women on the left and of the

bishop on the right being peculiarly vivid and realistic, and the details of embroidery and ornamentation on the episcopal robes especially well handled; but the central figure holds me, absorbs me, enthalls me, while from the whole composition there emanates a peace, a purity and a hush that are truly worthy of Raphael.

Slowly and reluctantly I move on, and, passing the St. Anthony by Leandro Bassano, second son of the great Jacopo—a fine work this, a modern work indeed, but much blackened, and of little interest to one in search of the creations of the Vicentine school—I pause before the quaint, pensive *Madonna of the Stars*, seated upon billowing clouds against a glorious background of richest gold, and pressing the Holy Infant tenderly to her breast. Around this ingenuous creation of some unknown and primitive artist, *Fogolino* has painted a circle of most delicious angels and cherubs. These are simply well-nurtured, round-cheeked, truly human babies, playing, with serious faces, upon all sorts of strange, unfamiliar instruments, while at the Mother's feet float four most charmingly unsophisticated maids—two singing, while two play on violin and psaltery. O sweet, simple, truth-loving masters of the early days, how much pure delight do we owe to your brushes!

And now, within a once richly gilded, marble frame—its glitter happily tarnished and softened by the great artist, Time—I behold one of the masterpieces of *Giovanni Bellini*, so strong and tender in colouring, so masterly in composition that it might well be the work of his vigorous pupil Giorgione. Even had he any inclination to do so the student must not neglect

this picture, for it was the Venetian school that found expression through the Bellini, and not the nearer school of Verona, that formed the style of the Vicentine painters. Of Buonconsiglio's work *Santa Corona* unfortunately contains no example. In this master's style the influence is very apparent, and it was with him that the school soared to its highest point.

In Bellini's *Baptism of Christ* the fair-haired, youthful Redeemer stands with hands crossed on naked breast, while the swarthy, skin-clad John pours the water of Jordan upon His holy head. The Almighty, with arms outstretched, floats in mid-air, while the Dove that has winged its flight earthwards, sheds a golden light upon the beloved Son. The Christ is divinely beautiful both in face and figure, but the expression of the placid countenance is baffling and enigmatical. The clear, soft eyes, gaze pleasantly into the far distance, a vague smile hovers about the tender, youthful lips, the low, white brow is serene and placid, the whole expression eminently lovely and human. For centuries there hung upon the walls of the Loschi Palace a Christ bearing the Cross, by Giorgione — a Christ with dark hair instead of air, whose face wore the same enigmatical expression, whose full lips smiled and still did not smile, whose eyes, though less soft and tender, looked thus into the far distance. The great work, alas, is now lost to Vicenza. It has in some mysterious way evaded the laws of the land, and crossed the seas to enrich the Gardener Collection in Boston.

But to return to the Baptism. Of the three female figures on the left the kneeling girl with golden hair,

whose wondering, adoring glance rests upon the Anointed One, is most beautiful both in conception and execution. The complicated landscape of hills, valleys, groves and villages is skilfully handled, being broader and more elaborate than most of Bellini's backgrounds.

The left transept contains a large canvas by Alessandro Maganza, representing *Christ in Glory*, with Our Lady and saints, and below San Raimondo, who is floating down a river on his knees, his dark mantle spread as a sail. The picture is unfortunately much blackened by the smoke of many candles, and the lower group is uninteresting, but the scene above is in Alessandro's best manner. This painter, a pupil of Fogolino, delighted in luminous, golden backgrounds. In the present instance the background is somewhat faded and has lost much of its original glow, but it has acquired a depth and mellowness of tone which it perhaps lacked in the beginning. The composition is admirable, the drawing faultless and the colouring soft and rich. Much skill in foreshortening is displayed, especially in the figure of the Christ. Behind the Virgin and hidden away in the corner, is Mary of Magdala with her jar of precious ointment, as lovely as the painter could make her. How these Vicentines loved the Magdalen and delighted in depicting her! The saintly person in deep yellow at the left of Our Lord is undoubtedly one of the artist's contemporaries—probably the donor of the picture, who had been generous with the ever-needy Maganza.

In the sacristy, whence the charming cloister of the neighbouring convent may be reached, is a beautiful

Madonna by *Schiavoni*, worthy of a visit, and also of a place of honour in the church. At my request the little sexton takes it down from its nail, dusts it with a snuffy handkerchief, and watches my admiration with a tolerant shrug, *Forestieri—si sa*—One must make allowances for these foreigners!

The high-altar, executed by the sculptor *Marinali*, is a marvellous—I cannot say a beautiful—monument in marble mosaic, executed in 1392 at the expense of the Sesso family. It is a perfect example of the worst form of the Barocco, and would be intolerable were it not for the delicacy of its workmanship and the beauty of its marbles. The choir-stalls are exceptionally fine, and deserve attention.

The black-curtained chapel on the right of the high-altar, was founded by Giovanni Thiene, a great favourite at the court of Gian Galeazzo Visconti, and one of his most valiant captains. He died in 1415 and was buried in this chapel which also contains the tomb of another warrior of the same family. The black and silver draperies are never removed, and thus for nearly five centuries has this illustrious house continued to mourn for two of its many glorious sons and daughters.

The Chapel of the Rosary contains numerous paintings by the Maganzas and other artists, but they are now much damaged, and were evidently never considered masterpieces, for writing in the seventeenth century, when they must still have been in a fair state of preservation, Boschini passes them by without comment.

In the third chapel on the right is the Adoration of

the Magi by *Paolo Veronese*, which Boschini, moved perhaps by his fervid admiration for Paolo, pronounces "the most precious gem of Santa Corona!" It may have been, and doubtless was, at one time a very beautiful canvas, but it is now so discoloured, so blackened, so blurred, that it fails to awake interest or admiration. The student, however, will discover much that is praiseworthy in the handling of the architectural portions, in the grouping of the figures and in the disposal of the draperies.

Outside the small door on the right is a portico which was built in the sixteenth century with some interesting remains from the ancient Roman theatre. How strangely incongruous is the pyramid-bearing elephant amidst these Christian and Mediæval surroundings!

Near this door stands a sort of wooden tabernacle in the form of a temple. It contains the remains of a fresco representing Our Lady, known as *La Madonnetta*, and which was painted by an unknown hand in the year 1300. The *Madonnetta* is a great favourite with the pious Vicentines, and her shrine is seldom without its worshippers.

Between the first and second chapels on the right is a faded saint, a fresco by *Piazzetta*, which usurped the place of an earlier painting by Maffei, representing Beato Matteo Carrero, to whom the ancient inscription which still exists at the base of the frame makes allusion. This inscription bears the date 1472, to which period the beautifully wrought frame undoubtedly belongs. The hand of Jacopo della Quercia or even of Mino himself, might have held the chisel that shaped

those delicate grape leaves, that drooping grain, those slender blossoms and graceful vases.

Above the great door is a *Crowning with Thorns* by *Jacopo Tintorello*, who laboured sometime in the fifteenth century, and is believed to have been a contemporary of Vittor Pisanello, whom he resembled in colouring, but to whom he was inferior as a draftsman. In the present picture the figures are unsatisfactory; their limbs are enormous, and the two executioners appear in imminent danger of "toppling over," so strained and unnatural are their attitudes but I contemplate the loftiness of the coffered vault, the space of the landscape, the great distance and broad sweep beyond the twin windows in the background, and refrain from condemning Tintorello, whose works, by the way, are extremely rare.

And now I stand at the main entrance once more, and the sun, glinting beneath the heavy curtain reminds me of the fleeting hour. So good-bye sweet Santa Corona, peaceful little temple, quiet abode of great beauty. Good-bye little snuffy, shuffling sacristan; you who have so often trotted after me with chairs and information! I am sorry to leave, but—*a rivederci presto!*

* * * * *

Turning to the left on leaving the church, I soon find myself opposite the quaint portico at the lower end of the Corso. Beneath one of its arches is a fresco representing the Shepherds' Visit to the Infant Saviour, which was an object of veneration and admiration when Boschini trod the streets of Vicenza, more than two centuries ago.

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A curious stone pilaster between two shops near at hand, bears the following gruesome inscription—

QUESTO È IL LOCO DOVE ERA LA CASA DEL SCELLERATISSIMO GALBAZZO DI ROMA, IL QUAL COM ISEPPO ALMERIGO ET ALTRI SUOI COMPLICI COMMISERO ATROCISSIMI HOMICIDII IN QUESTA CITTÀ DELLO ANNO MDXLVIII, DU III LUGLIO.

This Galbazzo was convicted in 1548 of the murders of three members of the Valmarana family, and of a Menza. Condemned to death by the Council of Ten, his house was razed to the ground. One pilaster, however, was suffered to remain standing that it might bear through the centuries the record of the murderer's hideous crime.

CHAPTER VII

SAN GIACOMO

JUST beyond the Corso stands the little church of San Giacomo, one of the seven chapels which were built in the time of Constantine. The exterior is still simple and unadorned and more or less what one would expect a Christian church to be in those early days ; but the interior offers much that is beautiful and of interest to the student and lover of art.

I push open the side door—the main portal is usually closed—and immediately discover that I am stepping upon a slab of stone that covers the dust of the sculptor Marinali, whose twisted, distracted figures we may not admire, but to whom we cannot deny a wonderful sense of what is decorative and a certain skill in the arrangement and grouping of figures. That he excelled as a composer of marble mosaic is clearly demonstrated by the wonderful altar in Santa Corona, which, I repeat, we may not admire, but at which we cannot fail to marvel.

The decorations of the flat *ceiling* of San Giacomo will at once attract the attention of the artist. Plain broad bands of gilded wood divide the space into compartments, and serve as frames to the lovely canvases

which are the work of the *Maganzas*, or, as some authorities say, of *Maffei*. Unfortunately these canvases display many rents and stains, and some are blackened to such an extent that not a single figure can be distinguished, but as the sacristan is kind enough to mount into the organ-loft and draw aside the red curtains that absorb so much light, and also as I have been an early riser on this fine and sunny June morning, I presently find myself delighted and amazed by the pleasing discoveries I am making, with the aid of my faithful companion, a powerful opera-glass.

A figure looms forth here and there, draped in softly falling garments; a saint shows against a dark and confused background; a face stands out from amidst the surrounding gloom, and the eyes look searchingly or sweetly down upon me. The head of Christ sheds heavenly radiance in the great central panel, and half-naked truth rests upon a bed of red and glowing velvet, while majestic justice holds aloft her inexorable scales. Charity, with lovely upraised arm from which the loose sleeve falls back in graceful folds, pours wine for the thirsty; the evangelists write or ponder; the prophets stand in commanding attitudes; angels soar upwards, and Our Lord stretches forth a blessing hand to multiply the loaves and fishes for an expectant multitude.

Yes, it is all there, and much else besides, and I enjoy it all the more because I must search it out, little by little, for myself. Of all the canvases of the ceiling the most lovely is that directly above the organ representing the Holy Trinity. The foreshortening in this work is admirable, and *Maganza* (for there can be no

doubt concerning the author of this composition) has given us one of those glorious golden backgrounds of his, so suggestive of the Christ by Correggio, in the Vatican.

The great picture on the wall to the right of the high-altar, representing David dancing and singing before the ark, is by *Giovanni Battista Maganza*, its companion on the left being attributed to *Cittadella*. There is much to admire in Maganza's canvas—the fine, kingly figure of David, the lovely woman opposite, and the clever arrangement of the crowd that presses from the back—but there is also much to criticize in the anatomy of the extraordinary beasts, intended for bullocks, that are dragging the ark. It is indeed strange that the early masters were so invariably unsuccessful in their attempts to render animals. We must come down to the days of Paolo, fond of painting his spotted canine friend who figures in so many of his larger canvases, before we find really skilful handling of the figures of animals.

The choir behind the high-altar contains a good canvas by *Alessandro Maganza*, a well preserved work representing Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph in glory, with numerous saints below. The colouring is fine, and the picture shows much depth of sentiment and power of lofty conception. The composition of Alessandro's work is usually (though not always, indeed) far more simple than that of Giovanni Battista's. Alessandro reminds us more of the Bellini, while the other tends to imitate the *fasto* and complication of the great Paolo and his school, a complication which with Paolo, however,

never becomes confusion, as it is so apt to do with lesser masters.

Just within the arch of the apse, on either side, are two long canvases containing most fascinating cherubs. Their author is unknown, but they are attributed by many to *Cittadella*. If they be indeed the offspring of that artist's genius, they are by far the best works I have seen of that very ornate, confused and hopelessly Barocco Venetian.

The first altar on the right of the main entrance is surmounted by a San Gerolamo Emiliani presenting his foundlings to the Virgin Mary. It is a work of the school of Piazzetta, and is flat and unsubstantial, but interesting because of the poor little waifs in their quaint brown costumes which you will see if you peep behind the hideous papier-mâché Santo Spedito—Santo Spedito, by the way, is the Saint who finds girls a husband in a hurry, within two months I have heard it said! The neighbouring convent was once a foundling-hospital, and the artist in this picture has given us the little "Bastardini" in all the pitiful helplessness of their position of shame, kneeling at the feet of our Lady, while Holy Gerolamo implores her protection for them. So full of sentiment is this conception that it is hard to believe it was produced in the age of superficiality and scepticism in which its author lived. Yesterday, in San Rocco, I saw a little band of "bastardini" clad in much the same brown uniform as these foundlings of the picture. Vicenza is even more conservative than most Italian towns—which is saying much!

Upon the wall of the following chapel hangs a St.

John the Baptist attributed to Tiepolo. The colouring is almost too strong for that artist's palette, and although the work certainly displays the touch of a master hand, and is cleverly composed, it contains much faulty drawing, and I should hesitate to set it down to the great Venetian.

The last chapel on the right is of especial interest, containing as it does the portraits of four holy women of the Trissino family. The three on the right, Sulpizia, Febronia and Vittoria are by *Maffei*, while Santa Sabina with the angel on the opposite wall is the work of *Alessandro Maganza*. The three on one canvas are wonderfully striking and powerful portraits. There is individuality and soul in each face, and much skill in the handling and disposal of the monotonous, dark-toned draperies. Santa Sabina is upon her knees in the presence of the angel. Prayer and adoration inspire her expression, and her tender lips seem to quiver with the emotion of the vision. This is the great lady interceding for the suffering, sinning multitude; the saint who has relinquished her all—position, family, love—to serve her beloved Lord.

Many of these great Vicentine families had their saints centuries before Piero Maironi relinquished Jeanne, and left her, aching for his return, in her lovely villa on Monte Berico, to go forth and become Benedetto, and be canonized presently by the enthusiastic poor of Rome.

Of the picture, Christ in the Garden, that adorns the second altar on the left, little can be distinguished, so blackened is it by time and smoke.

The first chapel on the left of the side entrance contains a canvas representing the youthful Tobias with his guardian angel. It was painted by order of the Confraternity of the Guardian Angel by the *Maganzi*, so Boschini says, meaning probably that it was executed in the artists' *bottega*, the scholars lending a hand.

Yesterday being Corpus Domini, this same confraternity of little boys, bearing an enormous banner and dressed in blue and white robes, took part in the great procession that was formed in the Cathedral and, issuing forth by the main portal, proceeded with music and chanting to the Corso, returning after a short absence by the same entrance. It was an imposing and gorgeous sight, as are all pageants of the Roman Church in countries where she still holds undisputed sway. The venerable bishop appeared in the sun-illuminated arch of the great door, draped in gold embroidered tissues, the sparkling monstrance clasped to his breast, his mitre and staff borne behind him by richly robed priests; and as young men, old men, monks and little children all in the medieval trappings of their order or confraternity, moved slowly up the great nave in solemn procession, crimson, blue or pure white banners and glittering crosses borne aloft between towering candles, and the incense floated upwards in little grey clouds, and the voices of young and old rang out in joyous praise, I remembered how often this same ceremony had been repeated since Pope Urban proclaimed the festival and established the forms to be observed. I remembered how immutable are all things that belong to Rome, and



Photo Edue. Alinari

reflected how hopeless, how thankless was the task poor Benedetto undertook, when he sought to change or even modify what has endured unchanging for so many centuries, and is the very life and being of so many millions.

CHAPTER VIII

MUSEO CIVICO

IN the architecture of Palazzo Chiericati which has now become the Museo Civico, we find Palladio in open contradiction with one of his own pet theories.

When, after the terrible fire of the twentieth of December 1577, Palladio, Antonio da Ponte, Simone Sorella and Francesco da Fermo were called upon to counsel the Most Serene Republic upon the restoring of the Ducal Palace in Venice, much discussion took place concerning the advisability of entirely demolishing the venerable pile and rebuilding it from the very foundations. Several valiant architects had already pronounced it unworthy of so great a State, and Palladio now proceeded to declare that it was constructed on principles entirely at variance with all the laws of nature and of art ! The Vicentine, however, did not propose to demolish the palace but to strengthen its lowest order by means of very large—*grossissimi*—pilasters, to be inserted between the columns. Fortunately the work of restoration was eventually entrusted to Antonio da Ponte, who on the fatal night of the fire that destroyed so many masterpieces by Tintoretto, Pordenone, Gentile da Fabriano, Titian, Bellini and Carpaccio, had risked his life amidst

the flames. He faithfully preserved for the delight of future generations that magnificent and imposing monument which still dominates the Piazzetta.

Now Palladio's objection to the style of the Ducal Palace was based upon the fact that its upper order is heavier and more ponderous than its lower, that—as he himself said—“the massive rests upon the empty, the broad and heavy upon the weak and narrow.” In support of this objection he declared that in nature all things are heaviest and most massive at their base; that the trunk of the tree is larger than its branches, the stem of the rosebush stronger than the twig that bears the flower. But how about man? his opponents asked. Man's limbs are but half the size of his body. Palladio was ready with his answer. Man is made to move, and architecture may take its laws only from inanimate nature. Moreover, it is a fact that man, to make his position firm, must spread his legs wide—another proof that the greatest strength must be at the base, and even then not in the centre, but at the angles.

This theory the artist elaborated and completed in his great work on architecture, but a true genius is never the slave of rules and maxims, and in Palazzo Chiericati Palladio has created a masterpiece and violated his own much championed theory.

In this charming façade the artistic sense finds perfect satisfaction and the eye rests approvingly upon the “massive” placed above the “emptiness” of the Doric colonnade. The graceful Ionic *loggie* to right and left stand firmly enough upon the “weakness” below, for there the “greatest strength” is certainly not at

the angles, but in the very centre of the building, where the master has grouped the Doric pillars. When he had completed his drawings did Palladio become conscious of the breach of faith he had committed against himself? He was probably conscious only that he had created a masterpiece, and the "masterpiece is not the child of man, but the child of God."¹

Like so many palaces in Vicenza, this also was left unfinished for more than a century. Having been again allowed to fall into decay, Miglioranza was appointed in the early fifties to restore its façade and arrange its interior for the reception of the art treasures it now contains. In 1870 the building was considerably enlarged, and the still unfinished walls in the courtyard show how much more spacious its original owner intended it to be.

The pavement of the atrio is composed of fragments of marbles from the Teatro Berga, while broken columns from the same source stand guard around the walls. The rooms on the right contain, besides a bust of Giovanni Miglioranza, further remains from the Roman theatre. The first room on the left holds the beautiful, draped figure of a woman, and the celebrated statues of Hadrian, Sabina Augusta his empress, and Matidia her sister. Sansovino and Brusasorzi were the designers of the fine ceiling. The following apartments contain fragments and remains from the Teatro Berga and from the Thermæ of Caracalla in Rome. A Calliope, a youthful Bacchus and a lovely

¹ Words spoken by Camillo Borro in the great hall of the Museo Civico, on the third centenary of Palladio's death.

torso (on the floor) are worthy of note as most excellent examples of Greco-Roman art.

In the courtyard are the fifteen sarcophaghi recently brought to light near the church of Santi Felice e Fortunato, of which I have spoken elsewhere. The rooms beyond contain many interesting early Christian and medieval remains. On the entrance wall of the second apartment are three frescoes attributed to *Fogolino*—the three upper ones—and a fourth above the opposite door, representing the Christ. These were brought hither from the convent of San Bartolommeo. Of the frescoes on the opposite wall the lovely St. Catherine is by *Paolo Veronese*—a most sweet and tender conception of purity and beauty. Here a superb effect is obtained by the simplest means. The frescoes on the right were discovered in the Cathedral, and are fourteenth century works by an unknown hand. Between the windows is a voluptuous and splendid female figure, probably Venus, a work of *Liberi's school*. The drawing is indeed open to criticism, but the flesh tints are wonderfully strong and the modernity of the whole composition is striking in the extreme. In this same room is a fine bas-relief head, white on black, which may perhaps be the work of Donatello.

And now I come to the picture gallery which occupies the upper story. It would be impossible to speak here at length of all the masterpieces it contains, and I must be content with pointing out a few that are especially interesting, and worthy of the attention of those who wish to gain a knowledge of Vicenza's school of painting.

The great hall holds several works which have nothing, indeed, to do with the local school, but which will at once arrest the visitor's attention. Among these are a fine example of Luca Giordano's style, and a powerful Bernardo Strozzi. But most striking of all are the famous Conception by *Tiepolo* and the Rectors of the Republic before the Madonna by *Bassano*.

The Conception is certainly one of Tiepolo's most perfect achievements. The very light of Paradise surrounds the Madonna and suffuses every inch of the canvas. The slim and graceful Virgin, lightly poised upon the globe, her girlish outlines revealed rather than concealed by her robe of glistening white satin, presses her dainty foot upon a great serpent that holds an apple in its cruel jaws. The globe itself floats airily in space, upheld by the crescent moon that is half hidden by soft and billowing clouds. Cherubs in graceful attitudes hover in the tender glow that emanates from the circle of stars above Our Lady's head. Floating gently in the solemn hush of this lofty atmosphere they are ready to join in the glorious pæan of adoration and triumph with which the heavenly choirs will greet the consummation of this sweetest of miracles.

Jacopo da Ponte, called *Il Bassano*, was born in Vicenza but preferred Bassano as a residence, and spent his days there, quietly producing an enormous quantity of work—much of which came to be sold at fairs—and attending to his numerous pupils. Among these was Carlino, son of Paolo Veronese, which shows in what high esteem Jacopo was held by the greater

master. The Rectors before the Madonna is in Bassano's second manner, the manner that delighted both Titian and Tintoretto. His handling and method of applying colour are distinctly modern and amazed his contemporaries, unused to a touch that "produces such a chaos of warring colours and such a general confusion that the eye of a close observer perceives not a perfectly harmonious whole but rather a discordant jangle ; nevertheless, such is the virtue of the work, that if the observer keep his wits about him and retreat to a distance, both his eye and the ear of his intellect will be delighted, and will presently revel in most sweet harmony, such as might be drawn by a master hand from a perfectly attuned instrument. He will furthermore witness the most happy union of Art and Nature of which human intellect can conceive." Thus spoke, in 1674, the critic Boschini, in his admiration for the "fierce touch" of this artist who produced such wonderful effects by means of "thick masses of paint that are without form and substance when closely examined, and that suddenly assume both when observed from a distance." A portrait by Bassano in the room of portraits will serve better even than the present picture to illustrate the modern tendency and technique of this bold master.

The great canvas of the Rectors, considered one of Jacopo's best works, is interesting both as regards composition and execution. It is warm in tone, happy in its colour-scheme, majestic in disposal and full of life and motion. The kneeling rectors are suggestive of certain portraits by Tintoretto, while the dignified Madonna and sweet, fair-haired Infant show

the influence of Parmigianino, many of whose drawings Bassano had studied in Venice.

The great hall also contains a Virgin and Child with saints by Fasolo that is somewhat pale and flat, but cleverly drawn. Between the windows, in an execrable light, is a small canvas by *Andrea Vicentino*, worthy of a better position. It represents a sumptuous banqueting scene. The guests, clad in glowing colours and sparkling with gems, are seated amidst splendid architecture, at a table laden with gold and silver and shining glass. All the gorgeous pomp of the sixteenth century looks forth from this small picture. The two canvases by *Pietro Liberi* containing nude figures are rich in tone, but wanting in spirituality, and too pink.

A *Maffei* in the first room is modern in handling, while in colour it clearly shows the influence of Paolo. The Four Ages of Man by *Van Dyck*, is a masterpiece in the fullest sense of the word. The knowledge of flesh tints exhibited in the four figures—infancy, youth, maturity and old age—is marvellous. The psychological significance of the picture is profound and striking. The maiden bears roses in her hand and hovers near the sleeping infant while her gaze seeks the face of the warrior in shining armour—maturity—who stretches out his hand towards youth's roses and holds his face resolutely averted from old age, a hoary-headed and venerable figure who points earthwards with warning finger, and in whom experience, knowledge, resignation and tolerance all find expression.

Beyond the Van Dyck are a Madonna attributed

to *Paolo Veronese* which, although not his in colouring, is dainty and very lovely; a fine Virgin and Child by *Titian*, and another by *Bronzino*, containing a surprisingly realistic old woman.

In the fourth room are some panels by *Battista da Vicenza*, the earliest Vicentine painter whose works have reached us. These primitive creations on gold backgrounds are among the rare examples of the venerable master's art. Beneath the triptych by *Paolo da Venezia*, signed and dated 1333, are some small figures by *Battista*. This work serves to fix the approximate date of the artist's activity.

Number 222 is one of *Cima da Conegliano's* delightful compositions, and is believed to have been one of his first important works. It was originally an *a tempera*, and has suffered somewhat through being transferred to canvas. Its colour-scheme is charming, and how pleasant is the shade beneath the vine-clad pergola on this warm autumn day, that has tempted the lizard to leave his nest and bask in the sun on the wall behind the Mother. The leaves stand out in clear and bold relief against a brilliant sky; the atmosphere is full of warmth and brightness. St. James and St. Jerome are dignified, well posed figures, and *Cima* has here displayed much skill in the handling of drapery. St. Jerome, in a mantle of glowing crimson, has a beard of snowy whiteness, that is as soft and light as spun-silk. The Madonna is perhaps wanting in spirituality and sweetness, but the Infant, surrounded by the soft blue of his Mother's robe, is a dream of fair-skinned babyhood and loveliness.

On entering Room IV, which contains many gems

of the local school, it will be well to look at once at number 265 in the corner on the right. This is also a *Battista da Vicenza*, and shows the master at his best. The picture is elaborate in detail of ornamentation, and the work put into mantle, halo and throne is exquisite in its delicacy. Above the door (number 272) a beautiful Madonna enthroned, with saints, and three winsome little gold-smocked angels at her feet, is a bold and well executed conception, and reveals the genius of *Girolamo dal Toso*, whose works are very rare. Number 268 is a good example of *Benedetto Montagna's* style, while to *Bartolommeo* we owe number 263—the lovely Presentation in the Temple. Architecture and background are cleverly treated in this most pleasing composition, and worthy of notice is the wonderful effect of gold obtained by the use of paint alone, without gilding. The picture is calm and spiritual, and warm with the glow of gold and the sheen of rich-toned fabrics. Number 283, the Madonna and Child enthroned with saints, signed by *Bartolommeo Montagna*, and brought thither, like many other works, from the now demolished church of San Bartolommeo, is another example of this earnest master's style. The Mother, queenly and serene, bends her adoring glance upon the delightfully natural Infant who distinctly resembles her. A lofty, arched portico, simple in style, rises above the throne. Birds perch upon the capitals of its columns, or flit across the blue sky set with light clouds that melt into cherubs' faces as we gaze. Four saints stand, two on either hand, and with an admirable sense of contrast, the artist has placed beside the

aged Augustine, the youthful, strong-limbed Sebastian. Statuesque in line and pose, Mantegna himself might well be proud of this splendid nude, and in this as in many other works the pupil has indeed shown himself worthy of the master. Montagna is more human, more tender than Andrea, who inspired him with a love and understanding of the statuesque and majestic. Three delightfully unsophisticated children stand at the foot of the throne, one playing upon a stringed instrument, one upon a sort of pipe, and the third singing.

Number 277, the Madonna and Child with Adam and John the Baptist, also by Bartolommeo, is a beautiful and deeply religious composition. The Mother in her warm toned and richly wrought robe and mantle of deep blue, is thoughtful and lovely while the Infant is the perfection of healthy childhood. Adam with grey hair and beard, and naked save for the wreath of leaves that encircles his loins, is an imposing figure, while John is the intense believer the recluse from the desert, who seems to say, as he points towards the Divine Child: "This is He whom I am come to foretell." The pose of the Madonna and the disposal of the picture with its well ordered background, is suggestive of the Bellini, but the influence of Mantegna is apparent in the stately figures of Adam and John.

Another treasure from the church of San Bartolommeo, also by Montagna, represents the Mother in adoration before the Infant Christ with Santa Monaca and the Magdalen (number 257). The pose of the Child is charming in its perfect naturalness.

The composition is all tenderness—all motherhood—all womanliness. The atmosphere is laden with joy and adoration, and so natural is the expression of the fair-haired Infant, that, as we gaze, His eyes seem to wander in smiling delight from one object to another. The colour-scheme is here more intense than in some other of Bartolommeo's works, and the Christ has evidently pre-occupied him more than any of the other figures, for upon the beautiful Babe he has lavished all his skill and care. The tone of the flesh alone is unsatisfactory, and this is probably due to unskilful restoring and retouching.

Giovanni Speranza is represented by an altar-piece on wood which unfortunately is not one of his best works. The Virgin floats amidst clouds, surrounded by cherubs, while two saints kneel below in a wonderfully complicated landscape of rocks and water, with a city in the distance.

The Entombment or *Deposizione* by *Buonconsiglio* (number 279) is, I am told, soon to be transferred to canvas in order to insure its preservation. The perspective and background of this work are remarkable, its atmosphere is light and transparent and all the figures are admirably drawn and posed. The sense of perfect relaxation conveyed by the attitude of the dead Christ is admirable, and every detail, even to the pattern on the napkin, has been most carefully studied. The Mother and John are gazing upwards as if engrossed by some heavenly vision, but the face of the dark-haired, richly clad Magdalen kneeling at the feet of the prostrate Lord, expresses wonder and disappointment rather than grief and

repentance. This panel also once graced an altar in the church of San Bartolommeo.

Another treasure from the same source is the Adoration of the Magi by *Marcello Fogolino* (number 281) a wonderful composition on wood that shows the early master in his happiest mood. A great multitude has come to Bethlehem in the train of the Orientals. Elephants, camels and horses laden with gifts and treasure, are winding their way up and down the steep mountain-side, while the foreground is crowded with cavaliers, servants, slaves, falconers, men-at-arms, dwarfs, dogs, horses, falcons, monkeys and rabbits. Mary, seated upon a rock at the foot of a steep cliff, with Joseph kneeling behind her, presents the Infant to the venerable Magus who has prostrated himself in adoration. The background is complicated in the extreme, but handled with surprising skill. There is reason to believe that the architecture of the temple that rises on the left was suggested by the remains of Teatro Berga, which were undoubtedly numerous and well preserved in Fogolino's day. The figure on the right in black and white tights, red blouse and cap, whose hand rests upon the trappings of the horse beside him, is said by tradition to be the artist himself, for the breast-piece he touches bears the inscription MARCELLO PINCT. Fogolino signed his work a second time upon the stone that forms the Virgin's seat. The three small panels beneath the great picture are worthy of attention, and, in the simplicity and restfulness of their composition, form a striking and pleasing contrast to the confusion, noise and movement of the work above.

Many of the frames in this fourth room are of rare beauty, and are probably those designed or chosen by the artists.

Room V contains a series of masterly portraits. A genial, sandy-haired DOCTOR ET EQUES, MDCXXXIV, painted by *Francesco Maffei*, smiles down from the wall on the right. The portrait of Ippolito Porto (number 335) is a good specimen of *Giambattista Maganza's* best work. Strong in colouring and careful in detail, he here reveals himself a worthy pupil of that greatest colourist of his age, Titian. *Alessandro Maganza* shows himself a clever portraitist in a number of well executed canvases, the cardinal with flowing beard being specially strong in technique and tone. *Gian Antonio Fasolo's* family group is splendidly direct and faithful, suggesting in its unsparing realism the northern schools of our own day. That the heads were excellent likenesses there can be not the slightest doubt—some of the children closely resembling their good-looking father, while others favour the plain, fair-haired, well-preserved mother.

Of the Vicentine school this room further contains, above one of the doors, a good family group of the Valmarani by *Girolamo Forni*, an amateur who died about 1594. A fine school of *Morone*, a clever *Maffei*, several *Jacopo* and *Leandro da Ponte* and a reputed *Tintoretto* are all works of interest.

The apartments on the left, beyond the portrait room, contain interesting engravings of the French, German, English and Italian schools, and a very valuable collection of drawings and manuscripts by *Palladio*, *Scamozzi*, *Marinali*, *Calderari*, *Arnaldi*, *Mig-*

lioranza, Fontana, Albanese and others. In the glass case are contracts and receipts in Palladio's hand, or bearing his signature.

On the stairs is a small collection of works by *Carpioni*—but of the modern pictures in the two rooms beyond, the less said the better.

A small private apartment contains some fine water-colours by *Tito Perlotto*, a wealthy Vicentine who worked towards the middle of the nineteenth century, and two excellent specimens of the art of the famous *Valerio Belli*, the engraver of crystals and of precious stones, whom Vasari calls Valerio Vicentino.

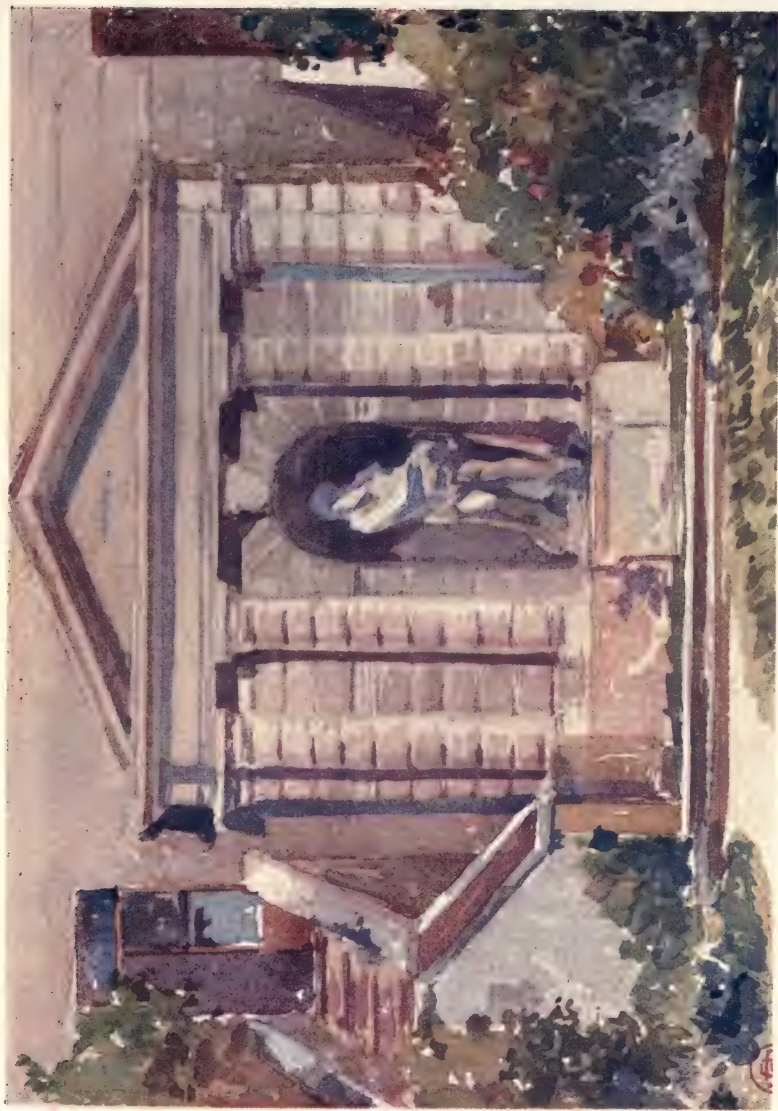
In this rapid sketch I have dealt at length more especially with the masters of the Vicentine school, but the gallery embraces many fine examples of other schools and will prove a source of much delight to the student and lover of the art of the past.

CHAPTER IX

BORGO—SAN PIETRO—SAN DOMENICO

THE way to San Pietro lies across the bridge, Ponte degli Angeli, below the Teatro Olimpico. The Bacchiglione has here often been guilty of great cruelty, frequently overflowing its banks and flooding the entire quarter. A few years ago the difficult task of raising the embankments was undertaken and successfully accomplished, and the Bacchiglione will, in the future, find it almost impossible to repeat its fatal outbreaks. The half-buried condition of the portico on the left demonstrates clearly how much lower was the original level of the Piazza and neighbouring streets.

The square beyond the bridge, and this entire district, in fact, has been the scene of much bloodshed and suffering. Here it was that the Paduans committed their awful outrages, when in 1314, believing Cangrande della Scala to be ill, and unable to move from his palace in Verona, they fell upon the city, and took possession of this suburb. The fortifications, of which some remains are still visible in the enclosure that contains the Teatro Olimpico, checked their progress, and held them in abeyance, but the Podestà, aware that the city would be unable to resist the violence of the Paduan for any length of time, sent off



IN THE VILLA VALMARANA GARDENS



messengers to apprise Cangrande of the danger that threatened. How he reached the city in less than four hours after he had received the summons and successfully routed the enemy has been told elsewhere (Santa Maria de' Servi). Meanwhile, the depredations and cruelties of the Paduan soldiery had been of a most frightful nature. The inhabitants of the wretched *Borgio* were tortured and threatened into relinquishing their money and treasures; fathers and husbands, bound hand and foot, were made to witness the dishonouring of their wives and daughters; little children were abused and mutilated, and the aged derided and insulted.

At last the troops attacked the holy nuns who then dwelt in the convent of San Pietro. Resistance was vain. The Paduans, maddened by wine and the horrible excesses of which they had so recently been guilty, poured, howling into the quiet abode of peace and charity, and subjected the terrified nuns to every form of outrage and indignity. Some sought refuge within the precincts of the church, but not even the presence of the Blessed Sacrament could save them from pursuit and capture. Amidst shouts and ribald jests they were dragged forth to infamy and suffering, and many—the more fortunate, indeed—to cruel and immediate death.

No wonder that the wrath of the city was such as to arm the very women against the enemy, whom Cangrande had surprised while they were sleeping off the effects of their horrible orgy of blood and murder, in the peaceful fields beyond *Borgio*; no wonder that the Bacchiglione flowed past Padua, tinged with blood!

So sure had the Paduans been of complete and easy victory that numerous carts laden with silver for the officers' tables, with soft beds, rich coverings and every luxury in the way of provisions and wine, had followed in the wake of the army. All these convoys were captured by Cangrande, and the treasure went far towards repairing the material injury the *Borgo* had suffered.

In Contrada San Pietro, on the left, is a marble slab that marks the spot where Ottone Calderari, one of the great successors of Palladio, lived and died.

At the end of this street we come in sight of the church of *San Pietro* itself. It stands in a shady square, flanked on one side by the former convent, on the other by a small oratory, that boasts a beautiful Gothic doorway in terra-cotta, surmounted by a fine fresco by *Giuseppe Scolari*, who was probably a pupil of Giovanni Battista Maganza. Boschini tells us that this is the only example of fresco by Scolari in Vicenza. The Virgin, her mantle wide spread, is welcoming the white-robed members of the confraternity who kneel, with their banner, at her feet. The composition is simple in the extreme, and realistically handled; the kneeling figures are lifelike and impressive.

The church of *San Pietro* is believed to have been founded by the holy woman, Elica, in, or probably before, the year 510. Elica, we are told, was of German origin. In the days of the invasions it was the custom of the more powerful barbaric chiefs to bring their families with them, and there is reason to believe that Elica accompanied her father into Italy, when the much-dreaded Goths swept down from mountain fast-

nesses and brought devastation and ruin to this land of plenty and of beauty. Elica, embracing Christianity, assembled a little band of pious virgins like herself, and with them came to lead a life of prayer and meditation in the monastery which she dedicated to Peter, and where she dwelt until her death. Her body was placed in a stone sarcophagus, and for eight centuries rested undisturbed in the church she had loved and created. In 1337 the Abbess Policasta Fiore, a native of Vicenza, caused the church to be restored, giving it its present Gothic form. The sarcophagus of holy Elica was then placed in the centre of the edifice, but now only the slab remains, and has been fixed upon the wall on the left of the main entrance. A second inscription was added in the fourteenth century by the Abbess Policasta. The first runs as follows:—

*Helica prima structrix, ex ingenuis orta Alemannis,
Hujus Monasterii, quingentis currentibus annis,
Juncto decennio; hic tumulata fuit.*

The second inscription reads—

*Abbatissa Florea Porcastrum stirpe oriunda,
Lapso milleno jam Christi solis ab ortu,
Ac tercenteno septimo junctoque terdeno.*

When St. Benedict founded his order towards the year 530, Elica's pious virgins or their immediate successors would appear to have been among the first to accept his rule, so that we may look upon the venerable monastery—now an alms-house—as one of the earliest abodes of the Benedictine order. The convent received grants both of lands and of moneys from many princes during the long years the nuns resided in Vicenza, and

we find them mentioned as the rich and powerful mistresses of numerous domains and villas throughout the province. At one time, in fact, they possessed the whole of this district, known, then as now, as the *Borgo*. The wealth of the convent was also greatly increased in the year 1130, when a certain Litolfo di Rasaga, together with his wife Feligonda and his daughter Maltildula—what delightfully resonant and pleasantly cadenced mediæval names!—entered the "double monastery," giving all their vast possessions to the institution.

The two statues representing Adam and Eve that stand on either side of the entrance to the alms-house, are among the best works of Albanese; the Atrio contains a fine bas-relief by Canova, and the recently and beautifully restored cloister is worthy of notice.

San Pietro has been so often restored that there is little save Elica's tomb-stone to remind us of its great age. It is more or less Gothic in style but plain and severe, and its interior is unattractive. It still boasts, however, some fine canvases, and contains the tomb of the Maganza family, as a tablet testifies that is fixed to the left wall, near the side entrance. The inscription states that Alessandro Maganza, a member of the Accademia Olimpica, purchased the right of burial here for himself and his descendants, in the year of grace 1622.

The second altar on the left is graced by a *Giovanni Battista Zelotti*—Christ giving the keys to Peter. This is a powerful work containing splendid architecture and excellent perspective. Christ, seated among His apostles, wears a sweet, afflicted, but nevertheless

strong and manly expression. At His feet kneels Peter, his face expressive of his deep sense of unworthiness, his attitude all humility and devotion. The picture contains many figures but is so admirably disposed that there is plenty of space and atmosphere, and Zelotti has indeed been most happy in the pose and drawing of his life-like and spirited figures, and in the handling of the different planes.

The chapel on the left of the high-altar contains an admirable *Alessandro Maganza*, one of the master's finest works, but before it stands a plaster St. Anthony, successfully blotting out the very centre of the picture.

This canvas represents Santa Giustina, the dagger already fixed in her heart, kneeling at the feet of the tyrant who has ordered her martyrdom, and who points with commanding gesture to a bronze statue of one of the gods. Giustina, young, beautiful, and richly clad, has no thought for her persecutor or his idol. With upturned and rapturous gaze she contemplates the angel who hovers above her, clasping the martyr's crown. There is much in this picture to remind one of Paolo and his school—the rich, warm colouring, the bold, animated and firmly-outlined figures.

Behind the high-altar and its grove of candles is another glorious *Alessandro*, one of those golden-skyed visions of Paradise in which he excelled. Christ, seated upon clouds, is crowning Peter and Paul with wreaths of laurel. Lovely cherubs rest at the feet of Our Lord, a splendid figure, nude save for a rich red mantle. The face is full of dignity, and the gaze his Master bends upon Peter is one of ineffable and tender affection.

310 VICENZA, THE HOME OF "THE SAINT"

The two saints are venerable figures, and the whole work is spirited in the extreme.

The altar on the right contains another fine example of *Maganza's* art. A king offering his son to St. Benedict—a splendid composition, rich in tone and happy in detail. The heads are expressive and vivid, especially those of Benedict and his monks. The hands are admirably executed and modern in treatment. The perspective is poor and suggests the thought that Maganza's pupils may have been allowed to finish the work. The background and lower plane are unfortunately much darkened, but the heads still stand out in all their original strength and beauty. The light in this chapel is poor at all times, and it is a pity indeed that nothing is done to enable the visitor to admire and enjoy more fully such a magnificent work as this.

If we pass along the side of the church to the end of the short street and then turn to the left, we shall soon find ourselves in front of what is now a public dormitory, a lovely building in which the Lombard and Gothic are most happily blended. It will now be wise to inquire for *San Domenico*, which is near at hand, but hidden away in the garden of the orphan-asylum that occupies the spacious monastery of former days.

This church and the convent were built in 1518. The simple brick façade with its charming white marble portal surrounded by the trees and shrubs of the garden in which it stands, is restful to both eye and spirit, and prepares one for the beauties within. Passing beneath the lovely marble arch the visitor finds himself in a small church or rather oratory consisting of a nave only without aisles or side chapels. Here interest centres

upon the picture above the high altar, and the canvases that grace the ceiling.

The *Alessandro Maganza* above the altar is one of the artist's best works. The colours are still fresh and strong, and as the light is good, it is a picture to be thoroughly enjoyed.

On the right beneath a rustic porch sits the Madonna, a happy, youthful mother holding the Infant Christ upon her knee. A tiny halo encircles the baby head, with its soft, fair curls, and sheds a mellow light upon the mother and upon the kneeling Magus and his page in the foreground. The white-bearded, gold-draped king is in the act of presenting a precious vase, upon which the Infant has laid one small, pink hand. Behind the kneeling figure stand the other Magi, smiling down in delight and wonder at the Babe they have journeyed so far to behold and worship. A pretty, curly-headed page bearing what seems to be a large jar enveloped in a white cloth is charmingly natural, and the half-figures of a man and woman in the righthand corner—the man is probably the donor of the picture—are wonderfully lifelike and vivid. Servants and animals crowd the background, and the horses' heads are spirited and natural for Maganza. The picture is not spiritual, does not move us to fall upon our knees and join the Magi in adoration, but it is delightfully unsophisticated and human—the Infant is the picture of loveliest, happiest babyhood—and we bring away from the work a sense of light, of sweetness and of true beauty.

But what a change awaits us as we turn our attention to the paintings that fill the thirteen compart-

ments of the once richly-gilded ceiling ! These are all by *Maganza*, and are all masterpieces. The figures are large, powerful and majestic, the colours still fresh and glowing, the composition pleasing and correct. The largest canvas in the centre represents the Trinity in glory crowning the Virgin Mary. A golden light floods the scene, angels hover on all sides, saints rest upon the clouds and gaze eagerly upwards. The beautiful Magdalen, with full naked breasts and streaming golden hair, clasps her vase of precious ointment, and thrills voluptuously in the ecstasy of the moment ; a second lovely female figure in rich and flowing garments, looks out of the picture with eyes of wonder and delight ; the Baptist points upwards with swarthy finger, and the whole scene is movement, life and love—the gentle, swimming movement of the clouds, the inward life of the soul, the love of the spirits that bask in the glow of Paradise.

Above the altar Saint Cecilia and her husband Valerian kneel side by side to receive the martyrs' crown from the hands of an angel. The fair young bride is clad in robes of shimmering white and gold, while her warrior husband wears the light and graceful armour of the Roman patrician. Behind them in the shadow stands a stately noble, whom the light that surrounds the angels and martyrs fails to reach.

Above the main entrance a lovely female figure kneels before a king. Perhaps it is Esther before Ahasuerus, but it matters little what names may be affixed to the personages chosen by the artist to illustrate the power of admiration and desire to subjugate might and strength. The other compartments con-

tain the evangelists (John is especially impressive and spiritual), martyrs and saints. Every inch of canvas has its beauty, and every picture is a delight to be studied with growing admiration and wonder. The ceiling of San Domenico is a dream of lovely women, of strong men, of glorious saints and triumphant martyrs; a joyous song of praise to beauty, the outpouring of the exuberant gladness of a youthful soul.

On either side of the high altar a door gives access to a second church beyond. This was the chapel to which the nuns repaired while the one I have just left was open for public worship. There exist several documents which prove that Fogolino, Speranza and Verla all received payment from the nuns at different times between the years 1519 and 1526 for frescoes executed in church and monastery. Some of these frescoes have been restored and, freed from plaster and whitewash, once more adorn the walls from which they first looked down. The figures of the apostles and of various saints fill niches beneath the ceiling, and of these the St. John and St. Matthew are especially expressive and lifelike. Above the altar, and also in a corresponding position at the other end of the church, are five medallions with Christ and saints, surrounded by garlands of fruits and flowers strongly suggestive of the Florentine school of the time of Ghirlandaio.

Above the door leading to the magnificently spacious cloisters, with their splendid magnolia tree, is a Meeting of St. Domenic and St. Francis that is delightfully arresting and suggestive in its simplicity of composition and execution. *Fogolino's* must have been the hand that created most of these frescoes, although in

some the manner of *Verla* is apparent. They contain much that is Raphaelesque in pose and handling, and we know that Fogolino's style closely resembled that of Raphael when the youthful master left Perugino's school. In colouring these works are all strong and rich, the reds and browns being especially vivid and deep.

In the refectory is the pitiful wreck of a once magnificent creation by *Speranza*, who was commissioned to paint this Crucifixion in 1526. It was whitewashed in the early eighteenth century, and set free once more some sixty years ago. At that time it was subjected to treatment with oil and turpentine which a later restorer, in a fruitless attempt to transfer the fresco to canvas, essayed to remove with certain acids that have greatly damaged the work. It is, indeed, fast disappearing, and at present only two figures are even partially distinct—the Magdalen and St. John. The great picture, however, still conveys a wonderful sense of lofty position, of atmosphere and space, and must in its day have drawn very near the glorious Crucifixion by Perugino in Santa Maria de' Pazzi in Florence, which it so closely resembles in the simplicity of its composition. It is with a sigh of regret that the visitor turns from this dying glory and retraces his steps through the sunny cloisters to the pleasant garden beyond.

CHAPTER X

MONTE BERICO

THE tenth of July and the sixtieth anniversary of the great battle. A fitting day to climb the steep slope and visit the scene of so many acts of valour, of courage and of heroism—the scene of so much suffering and bloodshed, and of such glorious sacrifice !

I start early, although the solemn decoration of the monument to the slain will not take place until after sunset, for I wish to spend an hour within the cool and quiet precincts of the church, and later refresh my spirit before that wonderful Paolo that glorifies the walls of the cheerful refectory in the neighbouring convent.

A cloudless golden afternoon ; it will be well to keep within the town as long as possible, for the shade of the lofty palaces is grateful on such a summer's day as this. And so I wander down towards the Retrone, and come to the little church of the *Madonna delle Grazie*, its convent now a school for girls, and enter it for a glimpse of the *Alessandro Maganza* above the altar on the right, which is so fine, they say, that many critics have set it down to Paolo himself, and which, alas, I am not destined to study, for a dark curtain has been hung before it, against which looms a huge

papier-mâché St. Anthony, whose festival is imminent, and whose statue will block out the glory behind it for a month to come. "*Pazienza, Signora*," says the pretty school-girl who carries the keys, "'twill be for another time!" Ah, glorious patron of Padua, how often have I wished during my visit here that thy festival fell in any other month!

Following a pleasant path shaded by chestnut trees, I soon reach the bridge across the bubbling Retrone, and immediately the road begins to rise steeply. Donkeys, dozing in the shade, await the pilgrim who is too weak or too indolent to face the seven hundred metres of road that separate him from the sanctuary that crowns Monte Berico, but the pious pilgrim will gird up his loins and start bravely upwards, pausing beneath each of the one hundred and fifty porticoes to murmur an Ave Maria, and before each chapel to recite the Pater Noster.

This arcade was designed by Francesco Muttoni of Lugano, who was also the designer of several palaces in Vicenza, and work upon it was begun in 1746. The porticoes are graceful in curve and well-proportioned, and the glimpses I catch through the frequent openings in their walls of gardens, villas, green vineyards, rolling plains and distant hills, are beautiful beyond description. Each chapel and arch was the gift of some pious individual or family, of some guild or confraternity, and bears upon its façade the name or shield of its donor.

At the bend half-way up, where the arcade turns suddenly to the right, I cross the road and feast my eyes on the panorama stretching far away into the azure

mists that hide Venice and her sea. At my feet, beyond the vine-clad slope, lies Vicenza with her many towers and her mighty Basilica ; Vicenza, possessing, as Dane says in *The Man of the World* : “ . . . the little old genial soul of a venerable Italian priest ; cunning, witty, versed in the classics ; fond of a quiet, easy life ; of a life, however, not devoid of certain episodes of a mildly tender nature ; somewhat sceptical ; slightly greasy about the collar and rather shiny about the elbows. This strange idea had been suggested to Dane by all those narrow, treacherous lanes, that are always pretending to go to the right and then suddenly come out on the left, or to go to the left, and then come out on the right ; by all this old Latin, part of which savours of the seminary and part of antiquity ; by all those old sixteenth and even eighteenth-century palaces ; by all those contrasts, which seem intentionally mischievous ; the contrasts between this minute and essentially pretty architecture, and the neighbouring stupid-looking houses ; and finally, by all these silent spots where, here and there, blades of grass spring up, grass of such a soft green that we feel we also are quietly vegetating with it, and we think of nothing, while our hearts grow tender and spring-like.”

A whimsical and lovingly gentle description this of the spirit of the quaint city that lies before me, surrounded and embraced by green fields and sparkling waters. Gently rolling hills, their flanks dotted with white villas, encompass her to right and left, while beyond stretch the fertile plains where noisy locusts sing their hymn of praise to the sun they worship ; where the shady roadways are flanked by streams of

cool swift-flowing water ; where ducks and geese while away the long summer days, grazing upon aromatic herbs and tender grasses ; where busy villages cluster about towering smoke-vomiting chimneys ; where villas, that were better termed palaces, stand beside picturesque chapels, surrounded by green parks ; and where the vine-draped mulberry looms in long straight lines, waiting to sacrifice the waxen glory of its crown of leaves when the silkworm shall awake from its slumbers, ravenous for the feast.

Turning, I see behind me across the road an iron gate. Hence my vision sweeps the space that separates me from the Euganean Hills, beyond a valley sprinkled here and there with groups of cypress trees, and graced by the wonderful *Rotonda*, at the foot of San Sebastiano ; the imposing country house that Palladio designed for Count Paolo Almerigo in 1570—that *Rotonda* which Scamozzi finished for the head of the Capra family, and Lord Burlington copied and caused to be reproduced in the park at Chiswick. Goethe in 1786, charmed with this dream of grace and grandeur, described it in glowing language—

" . . . a quadrangular edifice, enclosing a round hall lighted from above. It is reached from all four sides by means of broad stairs, each of which leads upwards to a porch formed by six Corinthian columns.

" Architecture was perhaps never more splendidly lavish ! The space occupied by the stairs is far greater than that occupied by the house itself, for each separate side might well represent the façade of a temple. Of the interior we may say that it is *habitable*, but not *comfortable*. The hall, and the chambers as well, are

admirably proportioned, but as a summer residence the Rotonda is but ill-adapted to the wants of a family of distinction.

“In compensation, however, the mansion may be seen from all points, gloriously dominating the landscape.

“The main building, with its jutting columns, offers much variety to the eye of him who walks around it; and the builder’s object, that of leaving behind him a great entailed estate in the form of a ponderous monument to his opulence, is perfectly accomplished.

“And, as the edifice in all its splendour may be admired from all sides, so is the view from thence one of the most lovely. We see plainly the course of the Bacchiglione, see ships from Verona floating down towards the Brenta, and we survey the broad lands the possession of which Marchese Capra wished to ensure to his family for all time.”

On the crest of Berico on my left stands Villa Fogazzaro, shining white amidst the green of its fine garden. Here the author of the great book that has so recently stirred the religious world, works and studies, refreshed and encouraged by the affection and admiration of family and friends, surrounded and uplifted by all that is most beautiful in nature and art. Hither the Senator comes to rest and meditate after the noise and bustle of Political Rome, and here his spirit is relaxed and restored, as he dreams upon the rose-terrace—as lovely in reality as in the pages of *The Man of the World*—or wanders beneath the spreading hornbeams that shade the “Valley of Silence” below Villa Valmarana—Villa Diedo of the book—adjoining the Fogazzaro

estate, or feasts his eyes upon the frescoes by Tiepolo that adorn the walls both of villa and of *foresteria*, and which his magic pen has so skilfully and picturesquely described in a masterly chapter.¹

All of these frescoes are works of the artist's early youth. In the composition of those in the *foresteria* he has followed joyously the dictates of his merry vivid imagination. Here he has depicted the masks of the festive gatherings of that age of powder, of patches, of silken hose and of rapiers; here he has drawn dwarfs, monkeys, grotesque Chinamen and lovely, naked, frolicsome babies, his quick and spirited brush hastening eagerly from one merry scene to another. But the works that embellish the walls of the villa show the master in a different mood, and reveal a familiarity with the classics and a depth of sentiment which cannot fail to surprise us when we consider the period and surroundings in which Tiepolo lived and wrought.

But the sun is beginning to sink. Presently it will slant across a certain red-curtained window in the church of Berico, and tenderly touch the splendid Montagna that has so often enticed me up the steep slope, and drawn me away from the hot and noisy city.

The great church with its broad and glistening steps, flanked by its soaring bell-tower and surmounted by its finely-proportioned cupola, looms white and majestic before me as I mount the last steep bit of road, pausing at every step to drink in the beauties of

¹ "Numina, non nomina." In *The Man of the World*, by Antonio Fogazzaro.



Bart. Montagna.

Photo Ed^{ne}. Alinari

“ PIETA ”

(Monte Berico)

the surrounding landscape that stretches away below me on the left.

Before entering the sanctuary I rest a moment in the shade and recall the story of the vision that gave origin to this rich and imposing pile.

On the seventh of March in the year 1426 a little old woman, Vincenza Pasini, the wife of a cartwright, fell upon her knees before a wooden cross that marked the site of the present temple, and offered a fervent petition to Our Blessed Lady for the deliverance of the unhappy city from the terrible pestilence that was then raging. Suddenly, in a blaze of golden light, and accompanied by the odours of Paradise and the music of the heavenly choirs, a sweet and beauteous woman floated earthwards out of the azure heights and paused before the prostrate suppliant, whom she lovingly accosted. "Fear nought, Vincenza," said the glorious vision, "for I am Mary, the Mother of thy God, who died on the cross for the redemption of humanity. Go, and bid the Vicentines build upon this spot a temple that shall be sacred to me, if they would be free from the scourge that now distracts them."

"But who will believe my words, O beloved Lady?" cried Vincenza.

Hereupon the Virgin, tracing upon the ground the outline of a church, answered—

"Bid them dig in this spot, and living waters will gush forth."

Then the dazzling vision faded away, and Vincenza, overflowing with joy and reverence, hastened to spread the glad news of the miracle and bid the sufferers take

heart at the prospect of speedy relief. But alas! neither the civic nor the ecclesiastical authorities would credit the truth of her marvellous story, and the townsfolk made mock at her, and proclaimed her a crazy fanatic. So nothing was done, and the fell disease raged more violently than ever. The terrified citizens began to foresee the speedy depopulation of the town, and despair filled all hearts.

Two years later a second vision sent Vincenza flying from the hilltop to the market-place, where her earnest enthusiasm triumphed at last, convincing even the most incredulous. From the market she was borne by the rejoicing populace to the episcopal palace, to tell her wonderful story to the Bishop himself. The ecclesiastical authorities soon succeeded in convincing the Podestà and his council of the authenticity of the miracle, and, headed by clergy and governors, an endless procession was soon winding up the rugged hillside in search of the spot the Mother of God had pointed out. Eager hands plunged the spade into the parched soil, and, as had been promised, living water gushed forth. Amidst the exultation of the throng the authorities vowed to erect a magnificent temple upon the holy spot, and on the following Sunday thirteen thousand pilgrims visited the miraculous spring and drank of its waters. The gifts and contributions of these and of other pilgrims were so large and so generous that within three months a church had been erected and solemnly consecrated to the Madonna of Monte Berico.

The vision, Donna Vincenza before the magistrates, and Bishop Pietro Emiliani laying the corner-stone

in the presence of the clergy and citizens, form the subjects of the three bas-reliefs above the portals of the present Late Renaissance church, the creation, for the most part, of *Borella* (1668). We know that in 1578, two years before his death, Palladio executed plans and drawings for the new sanctuary that was to embrace the original Gothic chapel which now forms the right transept. But Borella completely transformed the Palladian conception, and the ornate edifice of the present day is the result of many restorations, alterations and additions. No less than two-and-forty statues adorn its three façades, most of them by the much-praised and far-famed Marinali, creator of so many writhing and unrestful saints and angels. The interior of the sanctuary is rich in artificial marbles and massive stucco decorations, while gilding has been applied with a lavish hand around every arch and altar. But the general effect is rather gaudy than impressive, and when I have mounted the really magnificent marble steps and crossed the threshold, I hasten, without hesitation, towards the blaze of candles and the deep shadows that surround the altar of the Blessed Virgin, and its neighbour, glorified by Montagna's great work, both of which stand within the original Gothic church.

The altar of the Blessed Virgin, erected in 1530 at the expense of Vincenzo Scroffa, contains a miraculous statue of Our Lady, attributed to *Antonino di Nicolo* of Venice, a work of great merit and beauty. Unhappily, bad taste has been allowed to cover the lovely figure with a showy mantle, to crown the dainty head with a theatrical diadem, and burden the delicate ears

and gently swelling breast with heavy tawdry jewels and yards of massive gold chain.

Within the small pilaster beside the high altar, upon which rest the flasks of wine and of water that are used during the Mass, lie the bones of Donna Vincenza, who died in 1431. Two centuries after her death her coffin was opened, and her right shoulder, upon which Our Lady's hand had rested for an instant, was found to be still round and rosy, while the rest of her body was shrivelled and almost entirely consumed away. A pretty legend this, if nothing more!

And now the sun has dipped sufficiently to illumine the window on my right, and I sink upon a bench in the deep shadow beyond the door, and lose myself in the delight of contemplating the pathetic, deeply spiritual canvas above the altar in front of me.

Bartolommeo Montagna, pupil and disciple of Giovanni Bellini, still under the influence of the master's powerful personality and fresh from the *bottega* in Venice, has given us in this beautiful *Pietà* a work that might well be set down to Giovanni himself, so strong and realistic is it in composition, so soft and rich in colouring. The Christ, the Mother and John are repetitions of the three figures of Bellini's wonderful picture in Brera at Milan, while the cleverly-handled landscape is eminently suggestive of the great master's style. But Montagna was no common imitator, and in all his works we find that strong individualism, that independence of treatment which distinguishes not only this artist, but all the masters of the Vicentine school.

Art galleries are certainly admirable institutions, and to them we owe the rescue and preservation of

numberless canvases that for centuries have lain forgotten in dusty sacristies and lumber-rooms, have hung neglected in gloomy chapels, where the greasy smoke of candles has gradually blackened the once glowing colours, or have paled and crumbled upon the damp and mould-stained walls of deserted convents. But it is, nevertheless, an indisputable fact that pictures lose much of their charm when removed from the surroundings for which they were created, and it is always with delight that we find a venerable work of art still occupying its original position. We are willing to strain our eyes if, as is too frequently the case, the light be dim and the shadows thick, or to time our visit—as I have done to-day—in order to see revealed by a glinting, quickly-fading ray the solemn glory of a masterpiece such as this conception of Montagna's.

The Mother, seated on a rock at the door of the tomb, holds the body of the beloved Son upon her knees. One hand tenderly supports the drooping head, the other is stretched across the prostrate body and clasps the right arm. The Virgin has no tears, but voiceless agony is written upon her weary countenance, and her eyes that rest upon the face of her dead Son tell of days and nights of suffering, of months and years of anxiety and painful anticipation and dread.

The Christ, at rest at last upon the aching breast of her who bore Him, is to me the most moving and touching representation of our dead Saviour that I know. The tortured *man* is so apparent; the livid parted lips, from which the last great cry has so recently escaped, the poor torn hands, crossed lightly, the blood-stained feet resting on the slab of stone, are all so real,

so pitiful, so tragic ! The closed eyes are sunk deep in dark-rimmed sockets, but the face is not distorted, and peace rests upon the features that have relaxed once more after the tension of awful suffering.

On the right of the central group stands Joseph of Arimathea, grief and pity mingling in his expression with a sense of fear, as he glances nervously over his shoulder, in dread of the advent of the enemy. He is anxious to see the body of his Master laid safely to rest within the sheltering tomb, and his hands are clasped rather in entreaty to the Mother to relinquish her precious burden, than in adoration and prayer.

On the left stands John in all his youthful beauty, sorrow darkening the tender face, around which clusters a wealth of close-curling hair, so soft and thick that one longs to stroke it with caressing fingers.

At the feet of her Lord crouches Mary of Magdala. This is not the triumphant purified Magdalen of Santa Corona, but the repentant, mourning, adoring woman whose grief is too intense for tears, whose heart is torn and crushed, whose Love lies dead before her. Once more she will anoint and embrace the beloved feet of the Master ; the Master who drew her from the path of shame and whose frail and tortured body the tomb will so soon hide from her aching eyes. There comes no loving voice to comfort, as in days gone by, no word to soothe the dumb anguish of her breaking heart ; alone she must live through the awful years that stretch before her ; her Love is dead, the great, pure love of her life—now, and now only, in loneliness and desolation, does her true expiation begin ! How well he understood the Magdalen, this Bartolommeo, paint-

ing what was within his heart, what the story itself meant to him, the simple glorious story of a great love overcoming vice ! This episode of the Magdalen is the one touch that brings the Christ very near to many of us, and Montagna was one of those who understand. His picture is a hymn of praise, an act of adoration, a superb conception of love in its loftiest, loveliest forms—the love that sacrifices life itself, mother love, the love of disciple and friend, the love of woman !

Conscious that he had achieved much and put much of himself into his work, the artist signed his picture upon the slab of stone at the Virgin's feet. Near at hand lies an apple, the origin and distant cause of this immense sacrifice, while a butterfly that has alighted upon the rock represents the great comfort and support of millions of generations [to come—immortality, the one note of hope and joy amidst grief and mourning.

The sun has forsaken the window, and the picture that but now glowed superbly, is encompassed by dark shadows. I rise reluctantly and pass out of the church.

The façade of the small Gothic chapel, so judiciously restored by Miglioranza, which adjoins the modern edifice in the rear, and separates it from the convent, arrests me, and I marvel at the airy structure, bright with the warm reds of terra-cotta and brick, and glistening with the white sheen of dazzling marble. What a contrast it presents to the heavy be-stuccoed and be-statued edifice beside it, and how truthfully each illustrates and personifies the age in which it was created !

I ring the bell at the convent door. A pleasant-

faced monk escorts me across the charming cloister and up a short stair. Yes, yes, I know the glorious view from the window and balcony on the right. I will pause there on my return. The friar flings open the door of a spacious and lofty refectory, and pronounces the magic word, *Veronese* !

There it hangs, the "Banquet of Gregory the Great," an imposing canvas, five metres high and nearly nine metres long, glorifying the end wall of the well-lighted hall, and rivalling in beauty and excellence the famous "Supper" at the Accademia in Venice. There exist two stories concerning the painting of this picture. The first is to the effect that Paolo, having received the order for it from the Padri Serviti in 1570, was obliged to execute the commission in Venice, whither he had been summoned by the birth of his third child. While the battle of Lepanto raged and the city passed through a delirium first of suspense and then of rejoicing, Paolo would appear to have worked away calmly and happily in his bright and spacious studio, while the two elder children sported noisily on the floor with the great dog, and fair-haired Madonna Elena smiled tenderly upon the group, as she gave a lovely swelling breast to eager baby lips.

The other story tells us that Paolo—always quick-tempered and impulsive—being forced by a quarrel to fly from his native city, had taken refuge at the convent of Berico, of which his uncle was abbot. The merry artist, his little son Carlino and their great dog were made welcome by the hospitable monks, and remained for two years within the convent walls. It was during this time of enforced leisure that the picture

was painted, Paolo working more slowly and carefully than was his wont, pressing the friars themselves into service as models, arraying them now as bishops and cardinals, now as noble Venetians or as stewards and attendants. His uncle the abbot he painted in his dark and flowing robes, placing him at the head of the stairs on the left, Paolo himself, in old-rose, occupying a similar position on the right. Carlino, splendid in green and gold, and clasping a favourite spaniel, leans against the knees of a cardinal who is observing the central group through a large magnifying-glass. Zelotti and the youthful Fasolo also found a place in the master's picture ; one (it is not clear which) leaning against the pillar on the extreme right, is listening to the conversation a venerable white-haired gentleman is holding with a heavy-featured individual in a pointed cap ; of the other only the face and left arm and hand are visible, as he pauses behind a pillar on the abbot's left and takes an order from one of the guests, his outstretched hand holding aloft a heavy platter.

Gregory, in cap and cape of crimson velvet, is seated in the post of honour ; on his right Our Lord, in pilgrim's garb, is showing him the golden dish which, years before, the Pope had bestowed upon a beggar—the Christ Himself in disguise.

Gregory's endless charities have given rise to many legends, and at the church of San Gregorio Magno in Rome the great oak table is still preserved at which the Saint, then abbot of the monastery, daily entertained twelve beggars. One day the host counted thirteen guests, while the servants declared they had admitted, and could see, but twelve. The thirteenth, visible

only to the holy monk, was Our Saviour. When Gregory, who came of a wealthy and influential family, was studying in Rome before taking holy orders, his mother was wont to send him his food in a golden dish which he not infrequently bestowed upon the first beggar who appealed to him for alms. It was in this way that one such dish came to be given to the Master Himself, who, years later, seated at the Pope's table in the garb of a pilgrim, amazed the charitable pontiff by displaying the costly gift. "Whatsoever ye do unto the least of these, ye do even unto me."

This subject gave scope for all Paolo's love of magnificence and splendour. While he was painting, Palladio was building his glorious palaces and writing his famous books on architecture, and we may well fancy that the majestic columns, the lofty balconies and soaring, terrace-crowned porticoes of the picture were inspired, in part at least, by the designs and sketches the prince of architects had brought from Rome, and by his stupendous creations in his native city. The roof of one house on the right is shaded by a grape-vine supported upon a trellis, precisely such an arrangement as we may see in Venice to this day, and a truly Italian touch is given to the composition by the clothes hanging out to dry at a lofty window.

Pax Domini Sit Semper Vobiscum sing the cherubs above the central group, and peace and good-will reign around the hospitable board. Servants hasten up and down stairs with steaming platters; tiny Moors in sumptuous liveries bring cups to be filled with cool and sparkling wine; a steward dispenses food to a group of beggars upon the stairs on the left (Paolo

was thinking of Madonna Elena and the last baby when he painted that lovely, fair-haired mother and her rosy infant), a girl points out to her small brother a dejected monkey, chained to a stool ; a cat under the table watches for scraps of meat or bread, and the painter's dog peers round the corner, and sniffs the tempting odours of the steaming dishes.

Everywhere is motion, space, atmosphere and a glorious mingling of rich, mellow tints. A sense of joyous festivity pervades the scene, tempered by the awe-inspiring presence of the Christ. The Christ with His beautiful, tender, soft lips and dreamy eyes, from which shines forth all His love for the "cheerful giver."

The great picture, for which Paolo received six hundred troni (three hundred Italian lires) has not always looked down in undisturbed calm from the place for which it was created. In 1812 the all-grasping Napoleon ordered its removal to Paris, and it was with tears and lamentations that Vicenza witnessed its departure. Happily the course of political events arrested its progress at Milan, where it was placed in the Brera Gallery, remaining there for five years. Emperor Francis II in 1817 ordered its restoration to Vicenza, and amidst the ringing of bells, and the shouts of delight of the entire populace the great canvas was once more hung in the convent on Berico. Sixty years ago to-day, on that fatal tenth of June, the Austrian soldiers, bursting victorious into the silent monastery, flung themselves, sword in hand, upon the picture and cut it into two-and-thirty pieces, believing, in their ignorance, that the Pope it represented was no other than the hated Pius IX, at that time the *bête-noir* of Austria. A young

monk stood by and witnessed the act of vandalism with burning but impotent rage. Carefully collecting the pieces he conveyed them to a place of safety, the brutal soldiers making mock of him, and glorying in the sacrilege they had perpetrated. That monk, whose blood tingled with hatred and indignation sixty years ago, still lives on Monte Berico, blind and tottering indeed, but still capable at times of recalling in fervent language the awful tragedy of that memorable day. To the honour of Austria be it said that in 1858 she graciously sanctioned the restoration of Paolo Veronese's masterpiece—the expense, however, being borne by the city. The restoration was so skilfully and lovingly executed by Andrea Tagliapietra of Venice, that to-day only faint traces remain of the cruel rents inflicted by the Austrian swords, traces that, far from lessening the value of the work, consecrate it, like the rents in a glorious banner, as a monument to the noble struggle, long, desperate and cruel, by which young Italy flung off the foreign yoke, and proclaimed herself a nation.

And now the sun is sinking below the horizon, and the sound of martial music greets me as I close the convent gate behind me.

A long procession, headed by the mayor himself and all the civic authorities, is winding up the hill towards the Sanctuary. Military bands are playing the war-songs of the days of strife . . . Garibaldi's hymn with its stirring refrain: *Va fuori d'Italia, va fuori, stranier'* . . . Mameli's hymn . . . the Canto dei Crociati and, as the procession reaches the foot of the imposing monument on the right of the church erected in memory of the heroes who perished on June 10, 1848, the national

hymn of Italy brings a tear of thanksgiving and patriotism to many eyes. Wreaths of laurel are placed upon the monument, the mayor makes a short but thrilling speech, a veteran, leaning on a stick, comes slowly forward and tells of his experience on that day of disaster. His voice trembles, tears flow down his withered old cheeks, the crowd cheers madly: *Evviva l'Italia! Evviva i nostri eroi!* And heroes they were indeed!

Amidst cheering and patriotic music the procession passes down the hill once more. Men, women and children, workmen in toil-stained garments, young dandies in gloves, the bare-headed market-woman and the be-feathered, be-ribboned "bourgeoise." One enthusiasm thrills all hearts, one name rises to all lips, one thought fills all hearts—Italy, Italy, free and united! Thy bulwarks, the memory of thy martyred sons!

Ah, it is well to stir a people thus, to celebrate the anniversary of bitter defeat no less than that of glorious victory. It is uplifting and ennobling to commemorate those who fought and were overcome, but who fought not in vain, contributing their all towards the nation's deliverance!

But few are left of the ten thousand who faced the forty-thousand on that June morning. Lingered behind to avoid the crowd or perhaps to live over again in memory the different phases of the battle, I see a tall, rosy-cheeked old veteran, his breast covered with medals and a soldier's cap upon his head. Addressing him by the title of *Cavaliere*, for I note among the medals the cross of the order of the Crown of Italy, I beg him to tell me something of the great day. He is

willing enough, eager even to talk, and as we pace slowly beneath the towering trees, and the shadows of evening fall gently about us, he conjures up before me glowing pictures of the bloody, cruel fight.

"I was not on Berico," he begins, "but down by the cross-roads yonder, where, towards five o'clock in the afternoon, a bullet hit me and stretched me on the ground with a broken leg. It was well for me that I was not on Berico, for had I fallen anywhere about here the enemy would very probably have served me as they served so many wounded Italians, and pitched me into the ravine beneath the balcony in the convent.¹ From early morning until seven in the evening we fought, fought desperately—like demons—seeing our comrades fall about us, and gathering courage and rage from the sight; relinquishing our positions inch by inch; knowing almost from the first that the Austrians must win by sheer force of numbers, but determined to stand firm as long as possible, to make them pay dearly for their victory. For hours the Papal troops, the Swiss allies and the Volunteers, many of them mere boys, students from Padua, lads of Vicenza and neighbouring towns, under d'Azeglio and Cialdini, held the portico against Lichtenstein's well-armed and reckless followers. Within the temple itself they struggled, hand to hand. The Swiss defended the convent valiantly for many hours, and the friars were as bold and patriotic as the troopers themselves. But temple

¹ This fact is not corroborated by Meneghello, and is absent from the pages of several other historians, but is often affirmed and insisted upon by well-informed Vicentines, and the author feels justified in crediting the old veteran's statement.

and convent were taken at last. . . . You know how they slashed at the great picture, and cut it into many pieces. . . . There were sixty wounded and dying in the church when Prince Lichtenstein rode up the steps and entered the Sanctuary on horseback. A wounded Roman raised himself on his elbow and shot him dead.

“General Culoz—the battle over—drew up his battery on the terrace of the church. The soldiers, mad with joy and drunk with victory, tore the priestly robes from the presses and, draping themselves in them, executed wild, barbaric dances by the light of candles stolen from the holy altars, and surrounded on all sides by dead and dying. Meanwhile the music of the Austrian national hymn rang in the ears of our wounded, and even the organ in the Sanctuary was made to peal forth the hated anthem, while the church still reeked with the blood of our martyrs.

“Radetzky had ordered the bombardment of the city, and it was with despairing hearts that we listened to the thundering of the great guns, and thought of the awful havoc they were working in our beautiful Vicenza.

“At last at seven o'clock, the white flag appeared floating from the great tower in the Piazza dei Signori. The Austrians greeted it with shouts of joy and victory while we . . . I was still lying beside the road waiting for the ambulance or for death, at the hands of some prowling drunken Croatian, but I was within sight of the flag. Suddenly it floated in torn and ragged strips ; a thousand bullets, fired from pistols, from carbines, and even from ancient arquebuses by the enraged populace had riddled the shameful banner.

"But Durando was bound to surrender, and Colonel Alberi it was who strove all night, first with d'Aspre and then with General Hess, Radetzky's representative, and finally saved us from ignominious captivity, and our city from utter ruin. They still feared us, the savage horde out of the North! . . ."

The old man lapsed into silence. Quiet, unbroken save by the deep-toned music of great bells in the city beneath us, reigned on all sides. It was time to turn our faces homewards. As we passed the chapel of *Jesu Crocefisso* my companion resumed his narrative.

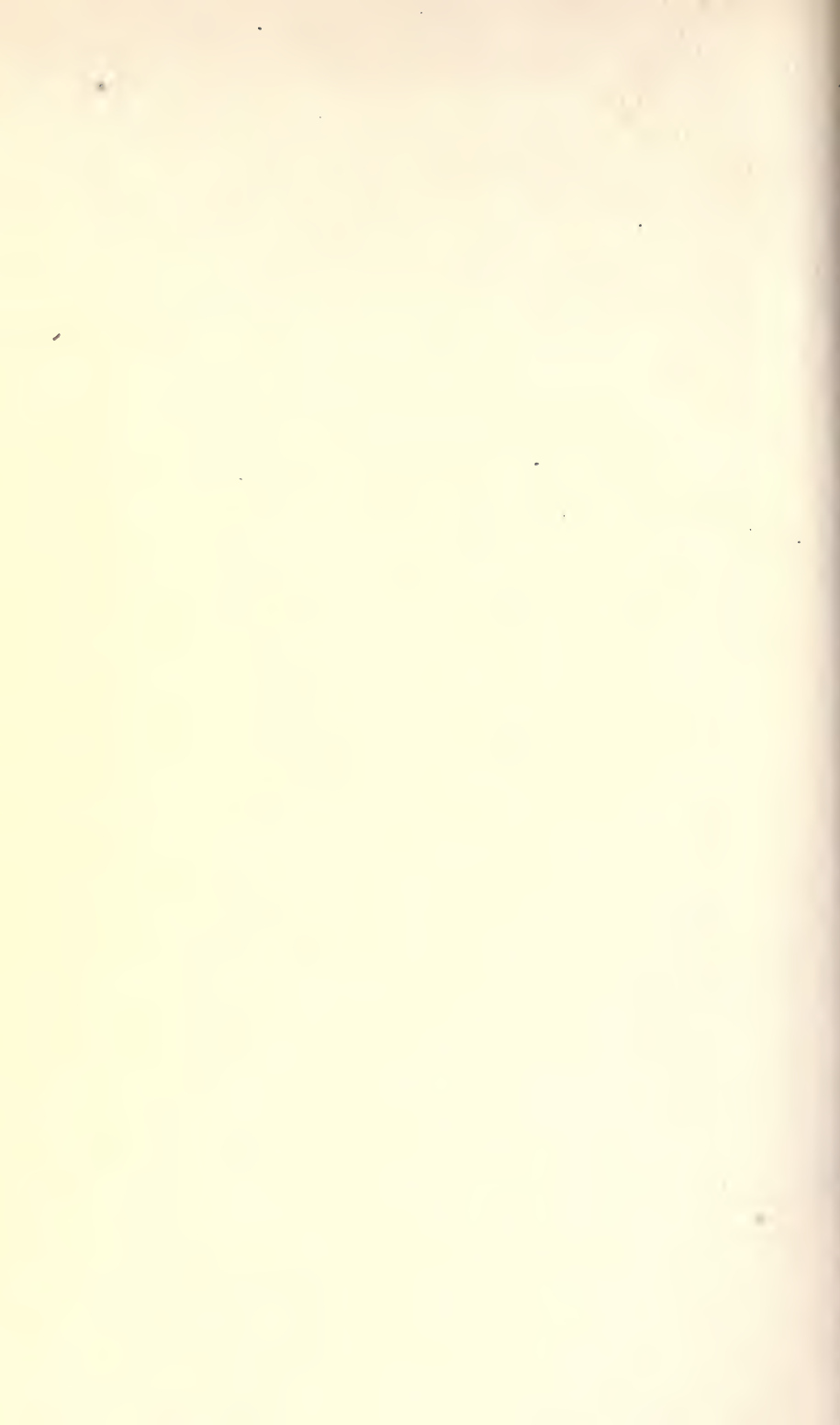
"Things went hard with us after '48. There followed eighteen years of persecution and suffering. I came in for my share, being continually watched and shadowed by the police, mysteriously thwarted in every business undertaking, often driven from my bed at dead of night that the masters might rip open my mattresses in search of papers or letters of a compromising nature. My young wife was ill for months after one such midnight raid. They had reason enough to suspect me, however, for I never ceased scheming and plotting, and was in communication with all the leaders — even with Mazzini himself. But I was careful never to keep a scrap of paper that might serve even as a clue, and so escaped when many who were far less guilty—if you please to call it so—suffered imprisonment or even death. One wretched peasant who was as innocent as you yourself, *Signora mia*, was executed in front of the chapel we have just passed. He was fond of a shot at a hare or partridge from time to time, and kept a rusty old gun hidden away under a hay-mow. This was a crime in those days, all fire-



Paolo Veronese

"THE BANQUET OF GREGORY"
(*Monte Berico*)

Photo Edue. Alinari



arms being strictly forbidden. A farm hand with whom the peasant quarrelled, denounced him to the police, and so the poor wretch was shot down, begging wildly for mercy and trembling like a leaf. He left a widow and eleven children, all under sixteen. . . . It was a hard case, that, and God knows there were many such!

"Well, here we are at the bridge, and our ways part. *Buona sera, Signora*, and forgive an old man's wagging tongue. 'Tis at once a delight and a sorrow to talk of those days of anguish and trial."

My path lies beneath the great majestic chestnuts of the Piazza d'Armi. Groups of laughing, merry children frolic in the twilight on the sweet, short grass. A blaze of light shows where a giddy-go-round whirls swiftly to the music of a wheezing, nasal barrel-organ. At small tables, round a gaily painted kiosk, in the flaring light of acetylene burners, sipping divers mysterious beverages of vivid and surprising hues, sit soldiers with their sweethearts, mechanics with their worn and faded wives, the city loafers with showily dressed shop-girls. Laughter and mirth on all sides and the peace and glory of a summer's evening.

On passing the Teatro Verdi I pause to read an inscription on a marble tablet fixed to the north wall. It states that the patriot, Antonio Turcato, was executed on this spot in 1860.

* * * * *

Monuments reminiscent of Roman greatness; palaces still rich in the glory of the middle ages; churches proclaiming the supremacy of Rome and the ardent faith of the people; prisons that stand for the

sin and torment of the past ; cypresses that mark the graves of heroes ; tablets whose short, laconic messages tell of oppression, suffering and injustice in recent years ; encompassing hills, fruitful meadows, vine-clad slopes ; laughter, rejoicing, prosperity and freedom ; such is Vicenza to-day after the varying fortunes of the centuries that have stretched from the coming of the Heneti to the advent of Victor Emanuel—from the city's founding to the breaking of her cruel bonds.

Dear, peaceful, beauteous Vicenza, seated in quiet retrospection on the banks of thy foaming rivers, may the future bring thee nought but happiness and prosperity, may thy long-fought-for freedom endure forever !

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